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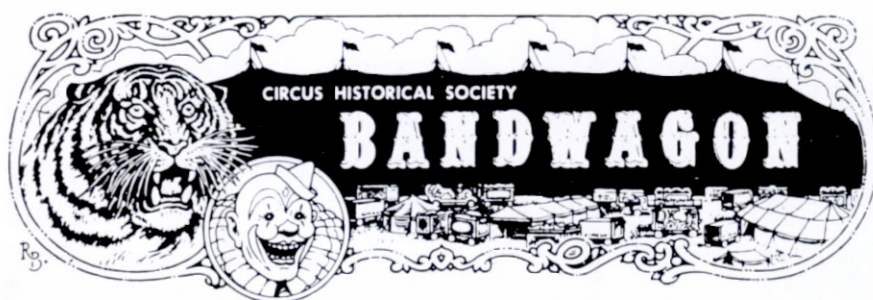
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THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July-August 1979





# THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Vol. 23, No. 4 July-August 1979

Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Editor  
Joseph T. Bradbury and Fred D. Pfening III, Associate Editors

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### THIS MONTH'S COVER

The Rice Bros. Colossal Railroad Shows, managed by J.H. Garrett, was a red hot grift circus traveling on 10 or 15 cars in 1913.

The very colorful four page courier on the cover of this issue was lithographed by the Erie Litho Co. The front and back pages are in full color, with the two center pages in blue ink. Some of the copy is interesting, sounding like it had been written by Floyd King. Such phrases as: "Invincible Monarchs of the Equestrian World; Half a Hundred Hippic Heroes from the Two Hemispheres; Real Clowns that cater to All Creation; Our Performance is Clean and Wholesome; With This Show There are No Short Change or Confidence Men; The Only Show That Gives the Public Exactly What It Advertises." Best of all is the line that runs the full width of the two center pages, "Rice Bros. will positively pay \$1,000 for the arrest and conviction of any one found grafting, shortchanging, or working games of chance in and around this show."

Old Dan Rice, whose picture appears on the cover would have rolled in his grave, had he known that this show was capitalizing on his name.

The original courier is from the Albert Conover Collection.

### NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

A completely new CHS membership application has been printed and placed in use on June 1, 1979. The new dues schedule of \$12 per year, plus \$1 processing fee is shown.

Please do not use any of the old applications showing \$10 dues per year. New applications are available from Secretary-Treasurer Edward L. Jones, or from the BANDWAGON Editor.

This is the time of year when we lose members and subscribers for non payment of dues. Each CHS member is asked to tell a friend about the CHS and the BANDWAGON. There are many people who would enjoy membership but are unaware of the Circus Historical Society.

### NEW MEMBERS

David Baruch 8213 Brattle Rd. Baltimore, Maryland 21208	#2469
Donald E. West 36 C Street-Navarre Village Navarre, Ohio 44662	#2470
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Chester Vradenburg  
212 Avenue D  
Fort Madison, Iowa 52627

#2487

African elephant, but the concern is that it will be extended to Asian elephants. The killing of elephants for ivory is the real concern of the Congressman, but a part of the bill states that it will be unlawful to transport in interstate commerce any elephant, this means that a circus could not take an elephant from one state to another.

Kathleen A. Reynolds  
5229 Main Street  
Maple Plain, Minn. 55359

#2488

Please contact your congressman and express your strong desire that this bill be defeated.

### REINSTATED

Agnes W. King  
28 Howard Place  
Richmond, Ind. 47374

#340

Allan W. Bratton  
1581-29th Ave.  
San Francisco, Calif. 94122

#854

W. Gordon Yadon  
P.O. Box 1  
Delavan, Wisconsin 53115

#1162

### CIRCUS PICTURE BOOK

Your special attention is called to the ad on the back cover of this issue. CIRCUS LIFE IN PICTURES, published by John A. Schmidt is a book containing 100 photos taken by Mr. Schmidt during his travels as an acrobat with the Sells-Floto, Sam B. Dill and Tom Mix circuses.

The Sells-Floto photos are some of the finest ever taken of the show in its final years, with many showing baggage wagons being pulled by eight horse teams from the train to the lot. This is a circus picture book that should be in your collection.

### MONTE CARLO TO CIRCUS WORLD

All dates contracted for the Monte Carlo Circus after June 30, 1979 were cancelled and the show was taken to Circus World where it opened under canvas on July 1. Further plans for the show have not been announced.

### ENDANGERED SPECIES

Dr. Roland F. Gibbs, CHS watchdog of new animal regulations that will affect circuses, brings to our attention H.R. 4685, introduced in the 96th Congress, by Congressman Murphy of New York. This bill calls for the control of importing into, and the exporting from, the United States of elephants and elephant products. Called the "Elephant Protection Act of 1979," the bill calls for effective controls on international trade in products from elephants such as ivory. The term elephant is defined as the

### AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON

1966 Jan. Feb., May June, Sept. Oct.  
1967 Jan. Feb., March Ap., July Aug., Nov. Dec.  
1968 All six issues.  
1969 Jan. Feb., July Aug., Sept. Oct.  
1970 All but Sept. Oct.  
1971 All but May June.  
1972 All six issues.  
1973 All six issues.  
1974 All six issues.  
1975 All six issues.  
1976 All six issues.  
1977 All six issues.  
1978 All six issues.  
1979 All issues to date.

The price is now \$2 each. Please add \$1 for postage.

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## WANTED

We are seriously interested in any and all CIRCUS, Minstrel, Vaudeville and other entertainment paper of any type you might have for sale.

**POSTERS, ROUTE BOOKS, FLYERS, BROADSIDES, GIVEAWAYS, HERALDS, HAND PAINTS, PROGRAMS, or any other paper.**  
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by Joseph T. Bradbury

The new year of 1947 had hardly begun when tragedy befell one of Zack Terrell's most valuable and greatly respected staff members, his brother in law, Paul Nelson. Paul, 33, the youngest of the famous Nelson Family of circus performers, was hunting pigeons with a shotgun on the farm of Terrell near Owensboro, Kentucky when the weapon accidentally discharged with the pellets striking his left leg. He was rushed to the local hospital where shortly afterwards the doctors found it necessary to amputate just below his knee to prevent probably fatal lead poisoning.

For several years Nelson had been one of the principal horse, sealion, and general trainers with the show. His accident came on Sunday, January 12, only a short time before he was scheduled to work acts contracted for the Orrin Davenport indoor circus dates at Grand Rapids, Mich. and followed by Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Paul. His wife, Ruth, was also scheduled for the tour to work elephants. The tragic turn of events in which Nelson's future career was in jeopardy required some quick personnel replacements for the winter dates. Terrell named Milt Heriott to work the horses and since Ruth Nelson had to remain with her husband, Patricia Scott, wife of elephant boss, Arky Scott, was selected to handle the bulls in the ring.

The January 25, 1947 *Billboard* which told the story of Paul Nelson's accident also mentioned that the Cole winter quarters in Louisville had been busy. Charley Luckey and his crew had finished the cages and sent them on to the paint shops in charge of George Churchill. A new railroad coach had recently arrived to be added to the train

and was now in the repair shops under supervision of Whitey Warren. (The coach, in all probability a system car purchased from some railroad, was used to replace one of the older cars.) Other notes said that the quarters' zoo was open on Sundays doing good business and that a special broadcast from the zoo was handled by Harry Thomas over local radio station, WGRC. The same issue also carried this advertisement.

"Cole Bros. Circus—Wants—Wild

Photo No. 19—America steam calliope wagon with 6 horse hitch ready for downtown bally at Mt. Clemens, Mich., June 22, 1947. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Collection.

West Cowboys and Cowgirls, Trick Riders, Rope Spinners, Whip Crackers, Novelty Acts, Perch Acts, Ballet Girls, Clowns, Bosses, Assistant Bosses, and Working Men in all departments. Write to Cole Bros. Circus, State Fair Grounds, Louisville, Ky."

This advertisement also appeared, "Cole Bros. Circus Side Show, Wants—Outstanding Side Show Attractions, Freaks, Human Oddities, Giant, Fat Girl, Midgets, Dwarfs, Pin Head, Novelty Acts, Man to work Fighting Lion Act, Fire Act, Lady Sword Swallower, Oriental Musicians, and Oriental Dancers, Hawaiian Dancers, Talkers, Ticket Sellers, Lecturers, Colored Musicians, and Performers. Colored Performers address, R.V. Lewis, 720 Sycamore St., Owensboro, Ky."

Circus business was in a boom situation with five railroad shows plus a goodly number of motorized outfits scheduled to go out in 1947 and consequently as can be seen by the Cole advertisements the various outfits were in need of personnel, performers and workmen alike.

Cole ran another advertisement in

Photo No. 16—One sheet upright by U.S. Poster Co. was designed to advertise Hubert Castle, tight wire performer. Title was in red, outlined in black, on a basic white background. Date tail is for Columbus, Ohio, May 24-25, 1947. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



the March 15, 1947 *Billboard* which read as follows. "Wanted—Wanted—Wanted. Cowboy and Cowgirl Trick Riders and Trick Ropers. Man or Woman to work on Trampoline. Man to train and work seals, and Clowns. Write or wire, Cole Bros. Circus, State Fair Grounds, Louisville, Ky."

There was actually very little in the trade publications concerning the show's activities in Louisville quarters in comparison to recent years but the Cole Bros. Circus as was customary repaired and repainted all of its rolling stock. The physical equipment was virtually the same as in 1946 when the show had enlarged to 30 cars. The wagon project which had begun some few years ago was essentially complete. The various baggage wagons now resembled van type trailers rather than traditional circus wagons. Although pneumatic tires had become increasingly available since the end of the war and most of the other railroad shows were using them, Cole Bros. elected to stick with the solid rubber, carnival type wheels, which were now on practically every vehicle, cages, the America steam calliope, even the two pony floats, Mother Goose, and Old Woman in Shoe.

Color scheme for baggage wagons in 1947 was red with lettering in white (or silver). Cages were painted in a variety of colors with white predominating.

The show continued to move on 30 cars which consisted of 1 advance, 5 stocks, 15 flats, and 9 coaches. As was the case the previous year one of the stock cars was used primarily for storage purposes. The 15 flats included 9 built by Warren, 4 built by Mt. Vernon, 1 old style straight side by Mt. Vernon, and 1 cut down from a former stock car. Color scheme remained the same, stocks, red with title in same color on a white letterboard, flats, yellow with title in blue-black, and coaches, red with title in white for all with exception of Terrell's private car, Owensboro, which was painted Pullman green with lettering in white. Color scheme of the advance car has not been determined but was probably red with white lettering.

We are most fortunate to have printed here the set of photos Bob Parkinson took in 1947 which pictures each of the 15 loaded flat cars. Also of great interest is the train loading order which lists a total of 61 pieces of rolling stock which were carried on the flat cars.

The 13 elephants carried in 1947 were Big Babe, Carrie, Louie, Jean, Little Jenny, Nellie, Tessie, Wilma, Blanche, Big Jennie, Little Babe, Trilby, and Kate. Other menagerie lead type animals consisted of 4 zebras, 4 camels, 5 midget asses, 1 Bison, and 1 water buffalo. Contents of the 10 cages are shown on the train loading order.

A total of 12 head of baggage stock



Photo No. 1—Loaded flat car No. 44. Photos 1-15 constitute a remarkable set taken by Bob Parkinson of the Cole Bros. train at Peoria, Ill. April 26, 1947. Each of the 15 loaded flat cars is pictured. Flat Car No. 44 was built by Warren Tank Car Co. and each flat in this series will have its manufacturer identified in the caption. This set of photos is now a part of the collection of the Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.).

were carried for train loading and unloading purposes primarily, however a hitch of six was used to haul the America steam calliope for downtown bally each day. The number of ring horses was essentially the same as in recent seasons.

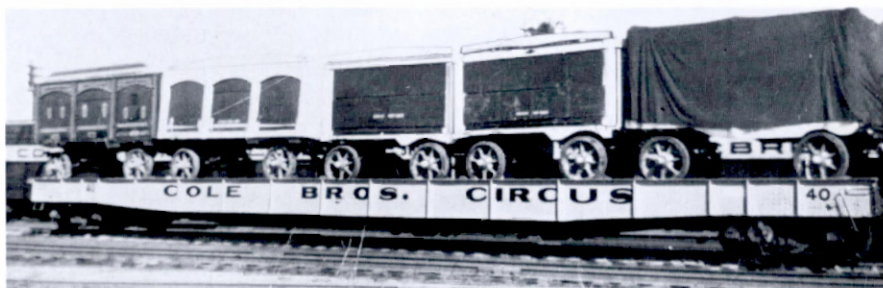
As will be noted in the *Billboard* review article Cole had a new big top in 1947 but retained a number of tents used the year before. Size of tentage was the same as in 1946.

With April here and Cole almost ready for the new season to begin still there was practically nothing in the *Billboard* concerning the show. The April 19, 1947 issue did have a short note which said that W.H. Woodcock had written from Louisville that George Churchill, in charge of the Cole Bros. Circus paint shop, has done a great job in decorating the show.

The happy news was spread around the circus world that Paul Nelson had a remarkably quick recovery. With his artificial limb he was able to get around well and was now ready to take his part in the 1947 performance. He was a valuable man in the Cole organization and the show's people were thrilled that he was back in harness so soon.

The labor turmoil which had prevailed during much of 1946 had

Photo No. 2—Flat Car No. 40 (Mt. Vernon).



subsided. Industry was moving along well. Although the military draft was still taking some men for army occupation duty mainly, the men who had served in combat were all back home picking up the pieces of their lives again. The cold war really hadn't got wound up and it'd be 1948 before it would. Generally, 1947, at the start of the circus season was calm. The GI Bill which would put thousands of ex-service personnel in colleges and universities as well as provide them with some extra spending money was in full swing. The really big money of the war time boom years had mainly vanished but still most of the populace some stashed away in the grouchbag. It should be a good circus season. No one, like Terrell the year before, was predicting a great 1919 type circus year. The many strikes and other adversities in 1946 had killed that kind of talk, but most show owners were still gearing up their outfits to relieve as much of the populace's spare change as they could. Certainly, Ringling-Barnum was expecting big things to happen as the show was going out a record high of 106 railroad cars. James Edgar had converted his motorized Sparks Circus of 1946 to rail show operation and in so doing had acquired brand new custom built wagons. Clyde Beatty was now the full owner of the rail show bearing his name and ready to get his 15 car circus to moving, and Ben Davenport with his Dailey Bros. Circus up to 20 cars was at the starting gate.

So the 1947 circus season was here. Five railroad shows going out included Ringling-Barnum 106 cars, Cole Bros. 30 cars, Dailey Bros., 20 cars, Clyde Beatty, 15 cars, and Sparks 10 cars. Motorized shows were King Bros., Bailey Bros., Stevens Bros., James M. Cole, Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros., Mills Bros., Hunt Bros., Rogers



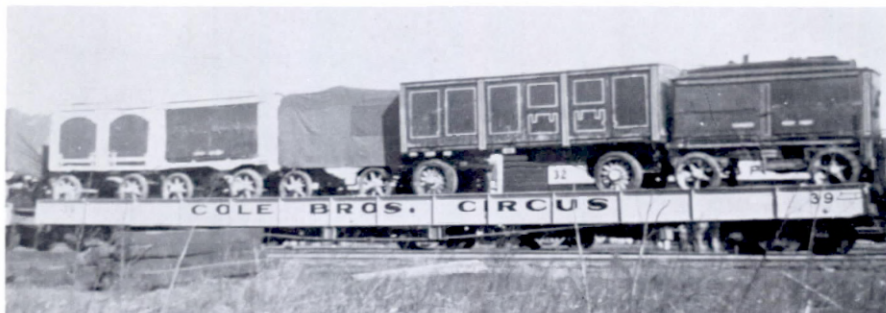


Photo No. 3—Flat Car No. 39 (Old style, Mt. Vernon).

Bros., C.R. Montgomery, Monroe Bros., Bond Bros., Sello Bros., Yankee Patterson, King and Franklin, plus a number of other smaller outfits.

Cole Bros. as customary for the past few seasons set its opening in mid April in Louisville, Ky. its quarters city. The stand this season ran from April 17 thru April 20. The April 26, 1947 *Billboard* carried a most complete review of the Cole show's opening. It ran as follows.

"COLE BROS. ANOTHER WINNER, Cristianis in Leading Role. Paul Nelson Overcomes loss of foot to regain position as outstanding Performer.

"Louisville, April 19—With a program that was improved all the way, Cole Bros. Circus opened its 1947 tour here, Thursday (17) afternoon to the complete satisfaction of owner Zack Terrell, a difficult man to please, indeed, and the customary collection of first-nighter circus fans, and an enthusiastic gathering of cash customers despite damp, chilly weather.

"Terrell was pleased to the point that he proclaimed it the best performance he has ever directed, and that includes his show last year which was pretty generally conceded to be the best on tour.

"The Cristianis family again is the backbone of the program, but they are aided and abetted no little by the acquisition of Hubert Castle, wire walker who readily admits his home is Dallas and that he learned his profession in this country. Other features rating top billing were Col. Harry Thomas' spec, The Clown is King; the Chambertys, a holdover from last year; Kay Clark's one-arm turnovers; Georgia Sweet's handling of the 16 horse Roman hitch;

La Louisa (Cristiani) on the single traps; the aerial ballet; the Davisos (Cristiani) perch, and Harold Voise's fliers.

#### Orchids to Paul Nelson

"It is a well-rounded program, circus from start to finish, and a big nod is due Paul Nelson for his portion of it. Paul suffered the loss of a foot in a hunting accident, three months ago, and already is back in the harness as active as ever directing the program and handling his assignments.

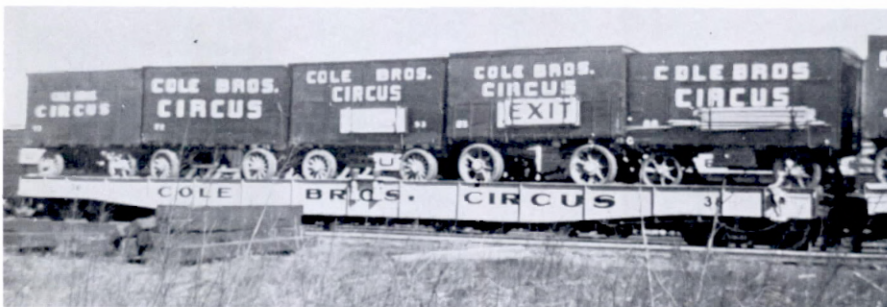
"Equipped with an artificial foot, he handled Harry, the riding sea lion and then worked his 12-horse liberty act from horseback, as he did a year ago and there were few in the audience not in the know who realized the handicap he has overcome to retain his place at the top of his profession.

#### Show Well Framed

"Terrell didn't go out for new canvas all the way this year, but his new big top, supplied by the O. Henry Tent and Awning Co., Chicago, catches the fancy. It is a 150 with three 50's, and is green with orange trim. As it is doubly reinforced, there is an unusually large amount of inside trim, and the color scheme blended in perfectly with the yellow and green motif of the costuming.

"The steam calliope again has been placed at the head of the midway to greet the customers, and to let the townsfolk know the circus is playing and Arthur Hoffman has an unusually

Photo No. 4—Flat Car No. 38 (Mt. Vernon).



attractive array of side show banners. All candy stands are in the same green and orange, blending in perfectly with the new marquee.

"By drawing in the ends a trifle and raising the peaks, additional seating capacity has been made possible for both grandstands. The same type of blues and grandstands are used, but it is possible now to use four rows of chairs on the ground behind the reserve seat netting. Also, the higher peaks add to the aerial displays and makes it possible for the Davisos to work the center ring.

#### Advance Well Handled

"Louisville was well aware the circus was in town and P.N. Branson's advance did a bang-up job of billing. In addition to the banners, lithos, and snipe, Branson used window cards featuring pictures of the star performers, and whoever did the carding had the main streets well plastered.

"Ora Parks, general press representative, handled this town, and he succeeded in making the conservative *Courier-Journal* and *Times* circus minded indeed.

"Merchants, too, were put in the spirit by Dick Scatterday, bannerman, whose display almost entirely circled the big top. His program, too, is a work of art, boasting an amazing number of national advertisers.

#### Woekener in Style

"Thru the entire performance Eddie Woekener, band leader, and his 14 men, including a calliope, cut it in great shape. After only one complete rehearsal, surprisingly few cues were missed, and the selection of music proved productive of every mood desired.

"Florence Tennyson, soloist, worked effectively, her vocals being well timed in the spec, and the ballet numbers. Thomas, of course, was the announcer, and his introductions were adequate, well placed and delivered in a masterful manner.

#### Spec is Colorful

"There has been a slight change in the lighting of the big top, which works to the advantage of both performers and customers. The low lights which were raised slightly above the ring curbs have been boosted 12 feet, which concentrates the light on the performers without the use of spots and does not glare in their eyes.

"These lights worked in well with the colorful, well costumed spec, The Clown is King. It took the customary tournament form with most of the people circling the rings at the conclusion to form a background for the ballet while Otto Griebing was being lugged on a throne in the center ring and then crowned.

"The Bounders, a hadgy-padgy



trampoline act, opened with the Laird and DeRue brothers working the track at each end. Bounders features a Chamberty and Ruth Nelson, but Mrs. Nelson was kicked by a horse Wednesday (16) and was just barely able to make an appearance, so Freddie Freeman and Griebbling filled in so Chamberty could get his breath, and this gave ample time to set the aerial bars (2) presented by Harold Voise.

"Barney Cole, the waltzing pony was presented on the track by John Smith, assisted by Horace Laird and Lee Virtue, while the Spanish web was being hung in the center ring for Kay Clark, who features more than 50 one-arm turnovers.

#### Davisos Solid Score

"Thrills came fast and furiously when Georgia Sweet thundered around the track with the 16 horse Roman hitch, followed by the perch display featuring the Great Davisos. Later act, a Cristiani, was forced to work in an end ring last year and its true value could not be appreciated.

"Davisos handles an unusually high shoulder perch and his wife, Louisa, offers a top routine including an upside down walk, handstand, trap routine and ankle drops. It was a solid click. The Del Mursl (Manuels) and the Excellos (Greehands) worked their perches in the end rings.

"Paul Nelson presented Harry, the riding sea lion worked by Marion Knowlton in the center ring with pony drills handled by Ruth Nelson and Milt Herriott in the ends. There were eight ponies in each group, well matched.

The Cristiani girls, Corcaita, June, and Ortans, worked the principal riding act, with the clowns on the track, and Smith and Alabama Campbell followed with boxing horses.

#### Elephant Men Out

"Ten elephants were worked, four in the center ring and three on each end, being fronted by Miss Knowlton, Bobbie Donovan, and Janet Lapisque. Eugene Scott, boss bull man, and his assistant, Bill Woodcock, were away taking the Scottish Rite. Men from the blacksmith shop and the train filled in perfectly, so effectively has Scott got his charges performing.

"Hubert Castle fitted in well as the next feature, and his polished performance was well received. His somersault thru a hoop was featured but his all around wire work would have been sufficient to rate him this spot on the program.

#### La Louisa Hit

"Paul Nelson was given full opportunity to display his natural flare for showmanship in his handling of 12 horse liberty act in the center ring while Marion (Alabama) Campbell

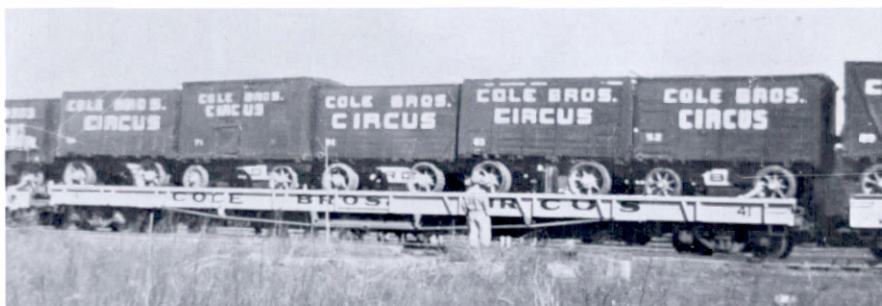


Photo No. 5—Flat Car No. 41 (Built from cut down stock car).

and John Smith handled groups of eight each in the end rings.

"Aerial ballet number followed with 12 girls on the Spanish web, with La Louisa working over the center ring. As the ballet paraded out, La Louisa, took over on a high single trap, and gave a sparkling exhibition. Her ankle drops were breath-taking.

Ruth Nelson, Marion Knowlton, Bobbie Donovan, Milt Herriott, Smith, and Campbell handled the gaited horses and they returned with Nena Thomas, Georgia Sweet, Janet LaPisque, Babe Woodcock, Ethel Freeman, Norma Adams, Josephine Monarch, Kay Clark, Mildred Chamberty, Maggie Wise, and Don Beall with the jumpers.

#### Chamberty's A Repeater

"Chambertys rated center ring alone again this season with their casting act, which was featured by a double pirouette, and well-timed comedy.

"Billed as the Ortans Troupe, the Cristianis took over with their tumbling and teeterboard. Miss Ortans succeeded in top-mounting a four-high without an announcement, and her two and a half to a chair was given the blurb. Both drew solid hands. The Freehands and the Manuels, hand balancers, worked the end rings.

"After the menage and jumpers, the Cristianis offered their sock family riding act with all members cutting it and Lucio, as usual, stealing the show with his horse-to-horse somersaults and comedy.

Photo No. 6—Flat Car No. 43 (Mt. Vernon).



"Harold Voise's Fliers worked in midseason farm, and the show was closed with hippodrome racing.

"Griebbling is surrounded by an unusually large and effective group of clowns. Walkarounds followed the customary patterns, but it was obvious that the versatile Otto has spent considerable time building his productions, which require a minimum of props.

"Griebbling and Freeman have their boxing bit down to fare-thee-well, and the quartet singing gag was embellished with a butcher chase and climaxed by a balloon-bursting bit. They also use the 'mob out of the car' scene.

"Steve Seline, billed as a Cossack rider, heads the Wild West, which is supplemented by Jimmy Ray, wrestler, meeting all comers.

"In retrospect, the program appeals as better than the 1946 presentation, as it is evident that more thought has been given to production and costuming. Features are stronger and while the program does not glisten with new names, neither does it confuse. There is action all thru the top the greater portion of the time, and after four performances it should click with the precision of a Swiss watch.

"There are many who think that Terrell will make this his last tour, as he definitely stated he would be interested in selling at the conclusion of the season, but those who watched him sail into the final details with the enthusiasm of a sophomore are inclined to believe that he'll always be making that 'farewell tour'."

The complete Cole Bros. 1947 Program was as follows:

Display No. 1—The Clown is King, a spec with the crowning of Otto Grieb-



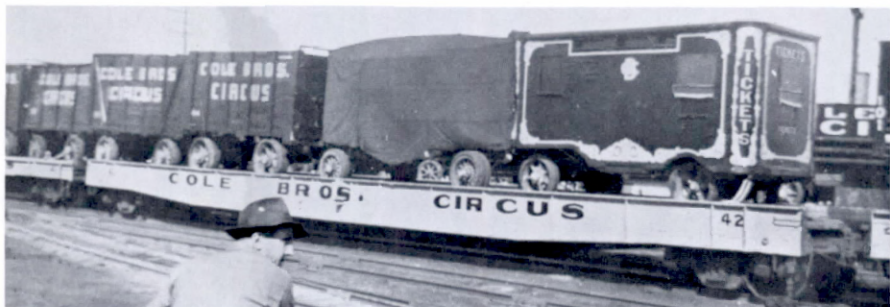


Photo No. 7—Flat Car No. 42 (Mt. Vernon). Wagon with canvas tarp is the American Steam Calliope.

ling as king; featuring the entire personnel in colorful costumes, lead stock gaily caparisoned, and elephants decked out in sparkling new blankets.

Display No. 2—Ring 1, De Rue brothers, contortion; Ring 2, The Bounders, trampoline; Ring 3, Laird brothers, knockabout.

Display No. 3—Herold Voise's two aerial bar acts billed as the Voise Troupe and the Harrold Troupe.

Display No. 4—Barney Cole, hind-leg waltzing pony, presented by Capt. John Smith, assisted by Horace Laird and Lee Virtue.

Display No. 5—Kay Clark, Spanish web routine climaxed by one-arm turn-overs.

Display No. 6—George Sweet and the 16 horse Roman hitch.

Display No. 7—Clown walkaround  
Display No. 8—Perch Display, Ring 1, The Del Murls; Ring 2, The Great Davisos; Ring 3, The Excellos.

Display No. 9—Clown walkaround.  
Display No. 10—Ring 1, Milt Herriott, 8 ponies; Ring 2, Paul Nelson's Harry, the riding sea lion presented by Marion Knowlton; Ring 3, Ruth Nelson's 8 ponies.

Display No. 11—Cristiani's principal riding act, featuring Misses Corcaita, June, and Ortans.

Display No. 12—Boxing horses worked by John Smith and Mahlon Campbell.

Display No. 13—Elephants, worked by Bobbie Donovan, Marion Knowlton, and Janet LaPisque.

Display No. 14—First concert announcement, featuring Steve Seline, Cossack rider, and Jimmy Ray, wrestler.

Display No. 15—Otto Griebing and his clown band, topped off by Ernie Burch.

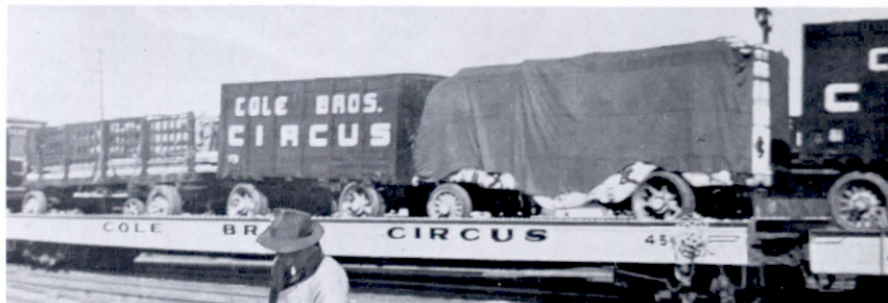


Photo No. 8—Flat Car No. 45 (Warren). Wagon with canvas tarp is the Columbia reserve seat ticket wagon.

Display No. 16—Hubert Castle, tight wire.

Display No. 17—Liberty Horses. Ring 1, Mahlon Campbell (8); Ring 2, Paul Nelson (12), Ring 3, John Smith (8).

Display No. 18—Aerial ballet, featuring LaLouisa, and Florence Tenyson's vocalizing.

Display No. 19—Three and five gaited horses, ridden by Ruth Nelson, Marion Knowlton, Bobbie Donovan, Milt Herriott, John Smith, and Mahlon Campbell.

Display No. 20—Clown quartet and balloon bursting gag.

Display No. 21—Chambertys, casting act.

Display No. 22—Clowns and ballet in "share the ride" gag.

Display No. 23—Acrobatic display. Ring 1, The Freehands, Ring 2,

Cristianis, featuring Miss Ortans, Ring 3, The Manuels.

Display No. 24—The fighters, Otto Griebing and Freddie Freeman.

Display No. 25—Second concert announcement.

Display No. 26—Equestrian display featuring Ruth Nelson, Nena Thomas, Georgia Sweet, Janet LaPisque, Babe Woodcock, John Smith, Marion Knowlton, Ethel Freeman, Norma Adams, Josephine Monarch, Milt Herriott, Kay Clark, Mildred Chamberly, Bobbie Donovan, Maggie Wise, and Don Beall, and the liberty jumpers, Scotland Yard and Niagara.

Display No. 27—Cristiani family

riding act, featuring Lucio, riding comedian.

Display No. 28—Clown walk-around.

Display No. 29—Harold Voise's Fly-ing Thrillers.

Display No. 30—Hippodrome races featuring ponies, liberty pony against horse and rider; jockey race, and Roman standing race.

#### Cole Bros. Roster 1947

##### Executive Staff

Zack Terrell, president and general manager; Noyelles Burkhart, asst. general manager; P.N. Branson, general agent and traffic manager; Fred E. Schortemeier, general counsel; Estrella Terrell, secretary; Robert DeLochte, treasurer; Lorne M. Russell, chief auditor; Watson N. Koontz, CPA general tax counsel; Paul Nelson, director of program; Col. Harry Thomas, director of performer personnel; William (Cap) Curtis, director of safety; Joseph Haworth, legal adjuster; Karl Knudson, master of transportation; H.E. Leeman, timekeeper.

##### Local Contractors

Henry V. Winslow and William J. Lester.

##### Press Department

Ora O. Parks, general press representative; Edward A. Johnson, Emmett W. Sims, and C. Foster Bell, story men; C.S. Primrose, contracting press.

##### 24 Hour Agents

Al Hoffman and Fred A. Loeber

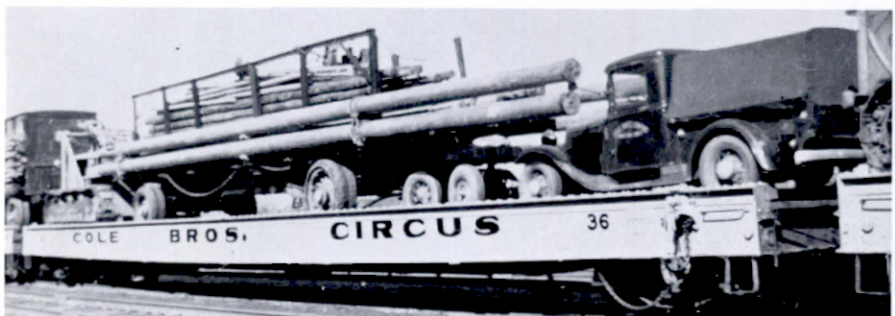


Photo No. 9—Flat Car No. 36 (Warren).



### Department Heads

Richard (Dick) Scatterday, national advertising representative; Arthur Hoffman, manager sideshow; Fred H. Donovan, chief of police; Ken Drake, asst. legal adjuster; George Davis, steward; Robert E. Morrill, supt. of ushers; Josephine McFarlan, wardrobe, assisted by Katie Luckey; Ralph Winarski, props; Charles Luckey, shops; Frank Casey, big top canvas; Eugene Scott, menagerie; Gene Weeks, concessions; Frank Loftus, front door; John McGraw, ring stock; Walter Rice, electrical department; assisted by Charles W. Burch; Ace Donovan, trucks and caterpillars; Frank Wise, big show tickets; Gus Talliefferro, programs; George Churchill, paint shops; William Spaulding in charge of train porters; L.C. Warren, trainmaster; Dr. George D. Woodbridge, physician; James Gephart, manager advertising car No. 1; William Wilcox, No. 2 car; Harry McFarlan, equestrian director; Pat Lyon, uptown tickets; Mayme Ward, ballet.

The official roster also listed a total of 24 ladies in the ballet, and clown alley, headed by Otto Griebing, producing, had 26 joeys.

The May 3, 1947 *Billboard* said the Louisville opening had gone smoothly. A reporter on hand noted the performance had been run by Paul Nelson, Harry Thomas, and Harry McFarlan, the big top was green, and the wagons red. New faces in the program this season included Hubert Castle, Harry Freeman, Miss Louisa, Kay Clark, and the Excellos. A final observation was that it was remarkable to see Paul Nelson back in action so soon after his accident.



Photo No. 12—Flat Car No. 48 (Warren).

p.m. which adversely affected attendance but at night the tent was filled to capacity. Two days in Peoria gave excellent business despite the cold and damp atmosphere. Bloomington on April 28 saw two capacity houses but another downpour belted the show at Champaign the following day. The final stand in Illinois came at Danville on April 30 where there was a full night house. The *Billboard* quoted Zack Terrell as saying the first seven days on the road had been more than satisfactory. It was also pointed out in the trade publication that if there was anything to the current economic speculation that a recession was setting in it surely hadn't hit Cole Bros. as yet because the show had been able to wallop everything but the weather.

The early season weather that Cole Bros. experienced all through the early and mid 40's was generally bad. It was wet and it was cold much of the

Photo No. 13—Flat Car No. 46 (Warren).

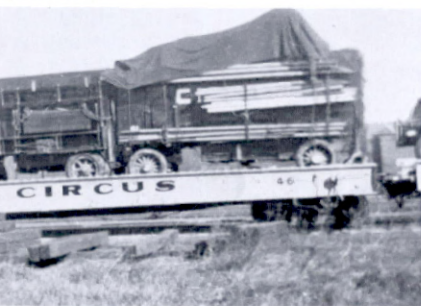


Photo No. 14 —Flat Car No. 37 (Warren).



Departing Louisville the show next played Owensboro, Kentucky, home town of Zack Terrell, then moved into Indiana for Evansville and Terre Haute, and on to Illinois with initial date coming at Decatur on April 24. The rains came at Decatur, from the time the train arrived until it left. Fortunately a packed matinee crowd was present and seated before the real downpour came but the night house was hurt on account of the severe weather conditions. It took all night for the show to get off the lot and loaded on the train for Springfield. The matinee in Springfield didn't start until 5:30

time but despite the poor condition of the weather the show almost always did some of its best business of the season while making its trip through Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

After the dates in Illinois the show moved over into Indiana 11 days and the May 17, 1947 *Billboard* reported that the swing through the Hoosier state had been O.K. despite the weather which was anything but warm. The first stand at Lafayette on May 1 was rough. An earlier rain had made the lot a sea of mud and it was cold. Because of the poor condition of the lot it was impossible to erect the menagerie top. However, both the matinee and evening shows produced strong houses. At the following three day stand in Indianapolis the date was marred by rain and cold weather which held down attendance until the final day when the skies cleared and although it was still chilly business picked up. The show was set up on a new city owned lot in Indianapolis. While in the city Frank J. Lee joined the show to handle press, radio, and department store publicity tie-ins. Kokomo, May 5, saw some ideal weather and as a result two capacity houses and the same was true the next day in Marion but on May 7 at Ft. Wayne it snowed causing the matinee to be delayed an hour. However, the Ft. Wayne folks did come out at night and there was a turnaway. At Richmond the following day there was a late arrival but it was a profitable stand. Businesses and schools closed at noon for the show and there was good attendance at both performances. While in Anderson May 9 the snow returned but it didn't keep the crowds away and there were two full houses. There were full ones again the next day in Muncie but at the final



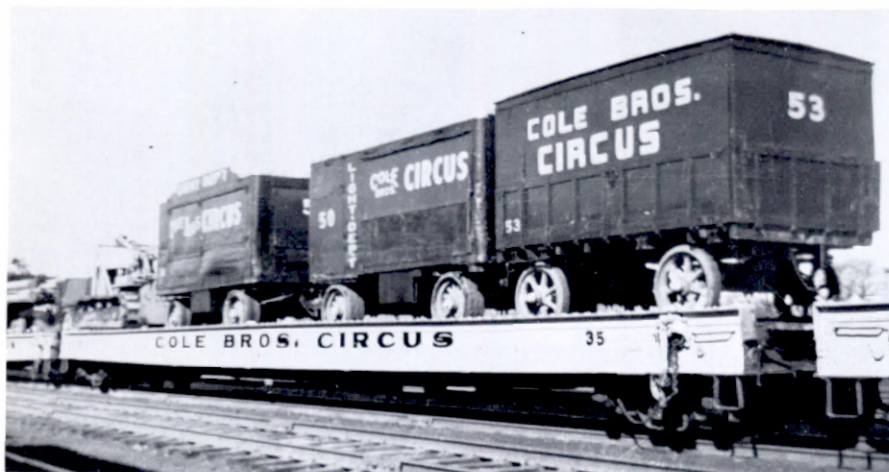


Photo No. 10—Flat Car No. 35 (Warren).

stand in Indiana, Portland, May 11, there was only a three quarters house in the afternoon and light crowd at night.

The route next called for a tour of Ohio for 8 days. First stand was in Dayton for two days, May 12-13, where the Circus Fans Association was holding its convention. Initial day saw perfect weather but there was a light crowd in the afternoon. The night house was much stronger and included 150 members of CFA in attendance. On the second day the show was hit by rain which resulted in light turnouts at both performances. Springfield, the next day, was a big one with two capacity audiences. Business continued good at Middletown where in fine weather there was a full matinee and turnaway at night. Moving on to the Cincinnati area the show played Hamilton, May 16, where there was a sellout in the evening following a fair matinee. Two days in Cincinnati found the weather continuing to be good, and although the opening matinee only had a fair house it was full at night and on the second day there were near capacity crowds for both shows.

Leaving Ohio for a short period the show went into Kentucky to play Lexington and Ashland, then over into West Virginia for Huntington and Parkersburg, and then back into Ohio for ten additional days.

The May 31, 1947 *Billboard* said that Cole was drawing in this area despite rain. Commenting on several of the stands the article noted that in Lexington, Ky., even with an all day rain the date was a big one with good attendance both in afternoon and at night. At Ashland, Ky. there was a three-quarters matinee and capacity at night. Huntington, W.Va. on May 21 really proved the show could still draw regardless of the weather. The heavy rain and muddy lot didn't hurt at all as there was a capacity matinee and full night house.

Returning to Ohio the show ran into more bad weather which at times didn't affect attendance too much in some

places but in others it did. After Zanesville the show played two days in Columbus, May 24-25 where overall attendance was only fair. First matinee crowd wasn't very large and rain in the evening hurt but still the attendance was considered satisfactory considering the weather. The next day saw a capacity matinee and strong night house. In Marion the show had to change lots after its arrival because of muddy conditions. At the matinee the tent was half filled and three-quarters at night. The show was next scheduled to play Lima on May 27 but rains had made the lot an impossible mud hole so the stand had to be cancelled. So bad was the weather the show didn't even bother to unload and the train moved on to Mansfield a day ahead of schedule. Rain on the previous day had made the Mansfield lot very muddy but the poor conditions didn't seem to bother the crowds. The matinee was well attended and the top was filled at night. Next came Wooster which was followed by Canton on May 30, Decoration Day, where there were straw houses at both shows. Two days in Akron produced light matinees but full night houses, and the final stand in Ohio the current trek was in Youngstown, June 2, where there was an all day rain, fair matinee attendance and capacity in the evening.

During the first month and a half of the 1947 tour the show had been moving along alright. There were few railroad delays as traffic on the nation's rail lines had finally gotten back to normal. Gone were the many frustrations caused by the many years of wartime conditions. Although the personnel situation had greatly eased it was evident the show still had some problems and a month into the 1947 season was advertising for several positions as per this ad which appeared in the May 17, 1947 *Billboard*.

"Wanted. Boss Hostler for 12 baggage horses. Boss Property Man.

Riggers, and Seat Men. Also Banner Puller. Address Cole Bros. Circus as per route."

No details on the sideshow were given until the June 7, 1947 *Billboard* finally ran a complete lineup of attractions which read as follows.

"Cole Bros. Sideshow—Goldie Fitts, inside lecturer; Rose Westlake, mentalist; Yovita Leyton, snakes; Fred L. Harris, Punch and Judy; Felix Manson, giant; Myra Brown, blade box; Leandro Perrin, novelty bells; Francisco Sanchez, accordion; Capt. Dee Ni Fong, fighting lion; Manipo Harris, comedy magician; Joe Lee, Chinese top spinner; Asenaan Fernandez DeLeon, armless wonder; Senor Roberto Esquiuel, ventroloquist; Serenadors from Monterey; Royal Hawaiians, entertainers, Joseph Carvalho, manager; Oriental models and dancers; sideshow band and minstrels, R.V. Lewis, leader."

Also listed in the same issue of *Billboard* was Eddie Woeckener's band of 17 members.

Leaving Ohio the show moved into Pennsylvania at Butler, June 3, but there was a late arrival due to heavy rains. Initially it planned to set up on the Duffy lot, later switched to the fairgrounds, but upon arrival found it

Photo No. 17—This one sheet upright also by U.S. Poster Co., pictured the Cristiani's Family teeterboard act. Title was in red, outlined in black. Date tail is for Davenport, Iowa, July 14-15, 1947. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.





was just too muddy there, so finally settled for the Pullman property near the ball park. As a result of the delay in the train's arrival, finding, and setting up on the lot, the matinee was two hours late in starting and by then the crowd on hand had thinned out considerably. The two following Keystone state stands were very good. Uniontown, giving two capacity houses, and Johnstown, where there were two straws. In Altoona, June 7, there was a near cloudburst and a very muddy lot and this combination yielded two slim turnouts.

The Sunday after Altoona was the first off day the Cole troupers had seen since the season began. It was spent at Williamsport and the following day the weather was perfect and two straw houses were on hand. The show jumped northward into New York to play Elmira, June 10, but because of a major strike in a local industry there was only fair business that day. Returning immediately to Pennsylvania the show played Scranton but the train got in late due to a hot box on one of the cars and as a result the matinee didn't begin until 4 p.m. Still the tent was almost filled and they were sitting on the straw at night. During the evening show two elephants performing in the center ring started a fight during their act and it took Arkly Scott to jump in and quiet them down. The show then went back into New York at Binghamton where in spite of a heavy dose of

Photo No. 18—Colorful one sheet up-right by Erie was used by Cole Bros. in 1947. Title was in red, outlined in black, on a blue background. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

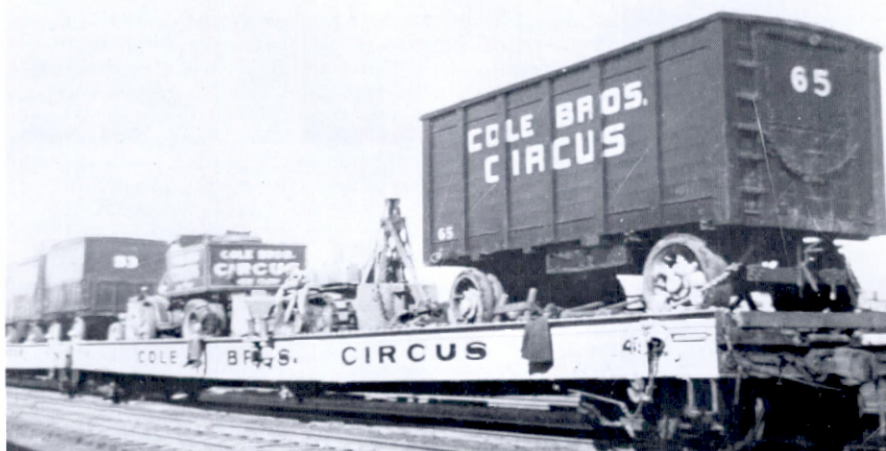
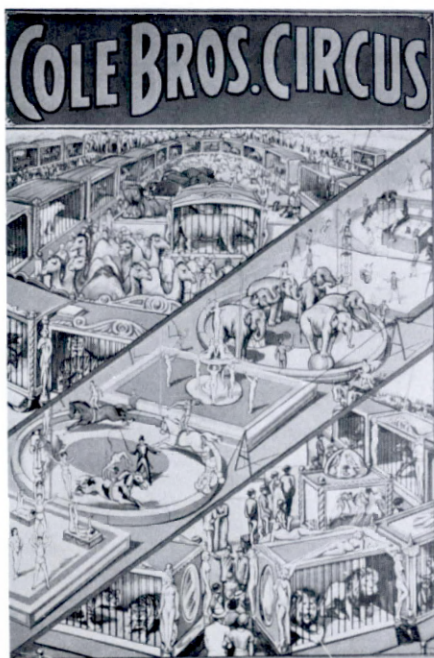


Photo No. 11—Flat Car No. 49 (Warren).

"wait" paper by Ringling-Barnum the show drew two straw houses. Hornell, June 13, was much better than expected giving a three-quarters filled matinee and full night house. Jamestown was the final New York stand, then Cole headed westward. It was at Erie, June 16, following a Sunday off. That evening during a sideshow performance Dwight (Dee) Nifong, animal trainer, working the fighting lion act, slipped and lost his footing in the cage. The lion standing close by snapped at Nifong's left foot causing several wounds which required medical treatment. Both performances in Erie saw capacity houses.

All through Pennsylvania and New York the show had run into heavy opposition from Ringling-Barnum. Freddie Freeman writing in his column in the June 28, 1947 *Billboard* observed that the "Wait Bros." have been much in evidence but they haven't hurt us. Freddie also mentioned that on the lot in Scranton, Pa. the show's cookhouse was set up a "sleeper jump" away but that nobody missed it.

The show went back into Ohio for the third time in the season with first date coming at Ashtabula, June 17, and again there were two full houses, Elyria, Sandusky, and two days in Toledo, June 20-21 followed. Business during the Toledo stand was described as good with the matinees being fair but the night turnouts strong. The Toledo date marked the final one in Ohio for Cole Bros. during the 1947 season. The state had been a popular place for many shows. There was a note in the *Billboard* that Akron which had Ringling-Barnum, July 14-15, had earlier in the season seen Polack Bros. for 8 days, the Eagles circus, 8 days, a rodeo 6 days, Mills Bros. 2 days, and two carnivals, one of which was the large railroad Cetlin and Wilson shows which played in the city for two weeks.

The show entered Michigan at Mt.

Clemens on June 22 and remained in the state to play a total of 12 consecutive one day stands. After Mt. Clemens came Port Huron, Saginaw, Bay City, Flint, Pontiac, Lansing, Jackson, Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Kalamazoo, and Battle Creek.

Practically all season long the show received fine coverage of its route in the pages of the *Billboard*. The July 5, 1947 issue told of the trek through Michigan with headlines, "Port Huron Big Surprise for Cole Bros. Org Gets 2 full ones". The article went on to say that the show was now getting used to big houses after finally getting a break on the weather. Port Huron where there was a small and muddy lot there were two full houses. Bay City produced a fair matinee but full night house. Rain hurt the matinee crowd in Saginaw but the skies cleared and a big turnout came at night. It was mentioned that Cole Bros. had to buck plenty of wait paper from Ringling-Barnum of late, a situation which prevailed for many weeks during the 1947 season. Mt. Clemens reaped plenty of newspaper publicity since it was the hometown of the Nelson family.

The July 12, 1947 *Billboard* continued coverage of the Michigan tour and headlines of the article indicated business had slowed down somewhat in the state, "Michigan Biz Proves Spotty for Cole Org". The piece said that despite ideal weather the show had experienced spotty business through Michigan lately. Kalamazoo, one of the better spots, had a three-quarters matinee and capacity night house. Muskegon saw a good matinee and at night the tent was almost full. Grand Rapids and Pontiac were termed "okay" but Lansing was off with only two half houses turning out. After the show left the Grand Rapids lot, residents in the area found a small donkey grazing on the circus grounds just vacated. Police were called but before they could take the animal several circus employees arrived and took the animal away in a truck.



After Michigan the show moved into Indiana for a single date, South Bend, which was played on July 4-5. The take was okay but was short of expectations. First matinee was near capacity with three-quarters at night. On the second day the afternoon crowd was capacity but in the evening only a fair number were on hand, killing the management's hope for a banner stand.

Following a Sunday run of 150 miles the show played Racine, Wis. on July 7 where the show did big business in beautiful weather. Good newspaper and radio breaks helped bring out the natives. There was a tie up in the railroad yards that evening which resulted in a late arrival at the next stand, Manitowoc, Wis. Because of the delay there was only a fair crowd in the afternoon but it was a better one at night. CHS Robert K. Kadow caught the show in Manitowoc that day and very kindly furnished us with the following after-notice which appeared in the Manitowoc newspaper the next day.

"CIRCUS THRILLS YOUNG AND OLD. The circus came to Manitowoc yesterday and despite a tardy start—it was six and a half hours late arriving from Racine—hundreds of youngsters and several hundred more oldsters, were happy it opened when it did as they sat in open-mouthed admiration of the best series of acts shown here in recent years.

"As aerialists performed off the 'flying trapeze', a tight wire specialist did the incredible, a variety of animals and riders went through their paces and a horde of clowns kept reappearing in manifold, grotesque costumes and equipment, the audience watched appreciatively and it was a question whether the children or their elders enjoyed the show more.

"Due in Manitowoc about 4 a.m. Tuesday, the Cole Brothers Circus started unloading from their private railroad cars on the 17th and Franklin street tracks at 10:30 yesterday morning. After their performances at Racine on Monday, the show was delayed by rail traffic coming through Milwaukee that night.

"The afternoon performance here was not well attended, possibly because the 'big top' was over an hour late in opening. The evening show

attracted a fair-sized crowd but there were whole seating sections empty.

"Outstanding on the program were Hubert Castle, advertised as the 'internationally celebrated wizard of the tight wire', the Cristiani family's acrobatic and equestrian acts and the 'Great Davisos', aerial balancers.

"Castle lived up to his extravagant billing with amazing feats on the tight wire, the most daring being a backward somersault through a hoop he himself was holding. The curly-headed blond performer needed two attempts to successfully complete this act, falling off the wire after his first jump. His balance and footwork throughout the demonstration was little short of sensational.

"The Cristiani performed both on the teeter board and on horses. The latter act was by far the more difficult and entertaining as they gave an exhibition of skilled bareback and group riding, while exhausting a half-dozen horses which cantered around the center ring.

"Lucio Cristiani, billed as the 'greatest clown rider of all times' may well be. In addition he may be the greatest non-clown rider, off his exhibition of casual dare-deviltry and equestrian acrobatics which included a somersault from the back of one horse to the back of a following horse.

"The Davisos thrilled the crowd with acrobatics atop tall poles balanced on the shoulders of male members of the troupe. Particularly eye-arresting was the work of Louise Daviso, as she walked upside down along a horizontal ladder fastened to the top of one pole. She also performed body whirls and other acts on ladder and a swing suspended from it.

"The Cole show had one of the finest elephant herds ever seen in Manitowoc. Performing in three rings the big beasts were put through their paces with a grand finale on both sides of the tent that thrilled the crowd.

"The show left here shortly after midnight for Green Bay where they appeared today."

Green Bay, Fon du Lac, and Madison completed the Wisconsin stands, then Cole moved southward into Illinois and played two days in Rockford, July

Photo No. 15—Flat Car No. 47 (Warren).



Photo No. 20—Noyelles Burkhart, asst. general manager, and wife, Hilda (Nelson), standing in front of Cole Bros. front door, season of 1947. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Collection.

12-13. The weather was blamed for the Rockford take amounting to only that expected from a good one day stand. First, a terrific heat wave which hit the area was blamed for holding the opening matinee to a half house and then at night the rains came to cool the heat but it also cut down on the expected crowd. Hot weather the next day hurt both shows with only light attendance in the big top. A two day stand in Davenport, Iowa came next. Again rain hurt the first evening show. A strong wind which came up just before the performance began bent the sideshow banner poles but caused no other damage. The big top was full the second night. Both matinees drew fair crowds. At Cedar Rapids, July 16, the show ran into some close opposition from Mills Bros. which played the town two days earlier under sponsorship of the CIO. Both shows suffered from an attendance standpoint. Locals said that Cole did better than Mills and got a fair matinee and full night house. More wet weather came the next day at Waterloo but the stand was profitable. Iowa saved its really big business until Cole's two day stand in Des Moines, July 18-19. It was the record stand so far in the season with both matinees strong and night houses capacity.

A Sunday run of 225 miles then took Cole Bros. to Kansas City, Mo. where it played three days, July 21-23. No records were set here but the take about equalled that of 1946. Matinee crowds were fair with the evenings strong. Going into Kansas next the show made a one day stand at Topeka

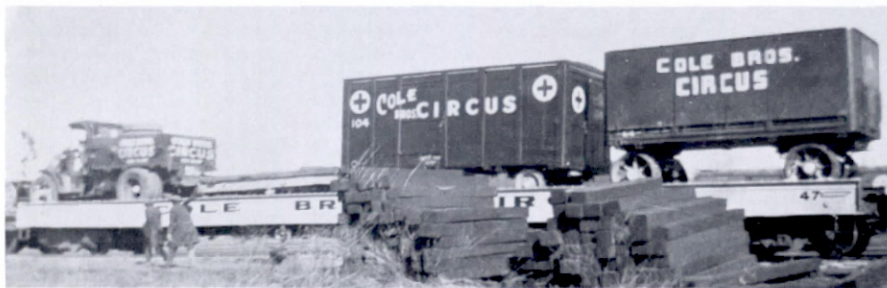






Photo No. 26—Milt Herriott, horse trainer, on Cole Bros. lot at South Bend, Ind., July 4-5, 1947. Photo by Otto E. Scheiman.

where an all day rain couldn't kill the business and attendance was good especially at night. For the next few days the Cole show played back and forth between several states. Leaving Topeka the show returned to Missouri for St. Joseph on July 25 where the weather for a change was ideal and as a result there was a full house at the matinee and overflow in the evening. Zack Terrell told the press, "It was the largest single day attendance we've had since Erie, Pa. early this spring." Next the show went into Nebraska where it played Lincoln, then into Iowa for a second visit with two days scheduled in Council Bluffs and one in Sioux City. The real hot weather returned and in Council Bluffs the temperature was around 100 which caused the take for the two days to be just a little better than that expected for only one. In Sioux City the mercury got up to 107. The matinee was still well attended but because of the terrific heat some 18 spectators were overcome with it. It cooled somewhat at night but was still pretty warm for the strong house which turned out. Next the show returned to Nebraska at Norfolk on July 30 and the weather cooled down to 95.

The August 9, 1947 *Billboard* said that the hot weather of late had hurt the show's business during its move through Iowa and Nebraska. Other notes said that the show had added a new publicity gimmick as part of its downtown bally each day. A midget and a giant from the sideshow make appearances at various downtown locations with Harry Thomas and Rose Westlake handling the deal. A

performance item advised that the Chambertys were temporarily out of the program as Johnny Chamberty had recently suffered a broken hand. In the same issue Freddie Freeman wrote in the gossip column that the run from Des Moines to Kansas City was 235 miles but the train was in town by 12 o'clock noon. To make it three restful days in K.C. the dressing room and cookhouse were only 50 yards from the coaches.

The 1947 circus season was now at the halfway mark. Generally most shows had done well. Several smaller ones were quite shakey and the new 10 car Sparks Circus making a long westward trek through Canada wasn't doing well. Ringling-Barnum had cut at least 5 cars from its trains but was still moving with a record number. Clyde Beatty wasn't doing anything like the amount of business it had done during its record tour of Canada in 1946 but Dailey Bros. was clicking well. The weather had been rough most of the season so far. The persistent wet spring and early summer had hurt many shows and now in the midwest the climbing temperature was taking its toll. Cole Bros. had so far done very well and minus all of the trouble experienced from the coal and railroad strikes of the previous season owner Terrell had much more stashed away in the grouch bag. Since the trip to the

Photo No. 21—Eddie Woeckener's band on the stand inside Cole Bros. big top at North Platte, Neb., Aug. 1, 1947. Woeckener is standing, hands on hip, next to the bass drum. In front, standing at left, is Harry Thomas, announcer, while Harry J. McFarlan, equestrian director, is seated in the center. Girl at right is unidentified. Photo by Arthur Stensvad.



west coast hadn't been very successful in 1946 he had decided against a repeat this year. The show would be routed as far west as Denver to take advantage of territory very friendly to Cole Bros. but then it would turn eastward rapidly and head toward the deep south and remain there much longer than had been customary in recent seasons.

Cole's westward journey toward Denver began at Norfolk, Neb. from which the show making 100 mile plus jumps crossed the state in two stands, Grand Island and North Platte. A 140 mile move next took the train to Sterling, Colo., August 2, which was followed by a Sunday run of another 140 miles to Denver where the show played for three days. Additional Colorado stands came at Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and La Junta and then the show backtracked eastward through Kansas picking up dates at Garden City, Dodge City, Pratt, McPherson, Hutchinson, and Wichita.

This great western arc the show made was covered thoroughly in the trade publications. The August 16, 1947 *Billboard* in headlines said that Denver had given Cole Bros. a record business and that Colorado Springs was also big. It was the biggest business in history for a Cole stand in Denver, Aug 4-6. Every performance was a sellout and so intense was the populace to see the show that on Tuesday three performances were given. In Denver memorial services were held at the grave of Jack Bigger, former trainmaster for the show. Earlier at North Platte, Neb. Cole's take was only fair with the matinee being light but a full house did show up at night. The train arrived late in North Platte and a lot two miles from the heart of the city further delayed set-up. Observers said





**Photo No. 22—Mack truck No. 1 hauling 3 Cole Bros. baggage wagons down the runs at North Platte, Neb., Aug. 1, 1947. Photo by Arthur Stensvad.**

that the show's advance billing was quite poor. Cole followed the Clyde Beatty Circus which played back on July 13. Leaving Denver the good times prevailed at the following date in Colorado Springs which saw the audience on the straw at both shows. The attendance was so heavy that the spec had to be rerouted because of people seated on the track. Pueblo and LaJunta were termed okay, with Pueblo being better with a three-quarters matinee and full night house.

The Aug. 23, 1947 *Billboard* continued with news of the Cole tour and said that Garden City, Kan. proved to be a real garden spot for the show. Originally the show planned to stop in the town only for feed and water on a Sunday run but Chamber of Commerce officials later talked the management into giving a matinee. With temperatures at the 100 mark the performance still attracted an overflow and an estimated 8,500 packed into the top. The news item went on to say that all in all the Cole tour of Kansas and Colorado was proving okay. At Hutchinson despite plenty of wait paper from an opposing show there was a strong matinee and capacity at night. At McPherson, Kan. there was a delay in getting off the lot as a severe electrical storm broke during the night show. Business was good that day with

a near full top at night following a fair matinee. Harry Thomas, announcer, was floored by a near hit bolt of lightning but wasn't injured. So severe was the storm that part of the night performance had to be eliminated for safety precautions. Hot weather hurt attendance at Pratt, Kan. but did not at Dodge City.

Cole moved into Oklahoma for ten days beginning with Enid on August 16 where the temperature went to 110 but the show still drew well. Helping bring out the crowd on the hot day was the fact that Enid was the home town of featured performer, Hubert Castle. At Ponca City it was not only hot but extremely windy. Two days in Oklahoma City came next, followed by single stands in Clinton, Altus, Lawton, Chickasha, Shawnee, and McAlester. It was a sad day for the Cole people while in Lawton on August 22 when word was received of the death of P.M. Branson, the show's general agent and traffic manager. Branson, 55, died in a Kansas City, Mo. hospital of a blood clot in his heart. For some time he had been at his home in Kansas City on account of poor health but had still been able to handle various matters for the show from there. Terrell named Bill Lester, contracting agent, to replace Branson. It had been the second general agent the show had lost in as many years.

At the final stand in Oklahoma at

McAlester the continued torrid weather held the matinee to a light house but it was better at night. Clyde Beatty Circus, which was in the state the same time as Cole Bros., had played McAlester a week earlier. Heading on into Texas it wasn't the heat which hurt the take at the initial date in Denison but rain. Business the next day in Paris, Texas was also slim. Texarkana was the final stand in Texas then Cole went into Louisiana with first date coming at Natchitoches. Enroute from Texarkana the train ran into delays which caused a late arrival. The matinee was an hour late in starting and played before a small house. Night business was good. Continuing in Louisiana the show played Alexandria on Labor Day but could draw only a half house in the afternoon but better at night. Lake Charles followed and then Crowley where the pattern of light matinees and strong night houses continued. After single days in Lafayette and Opelousas the show moved on to New Orleans for three days, Sept. 6-8. The opening performance was full and it was capacity at night, the second day had a three-quarters afternoon house and it was again packed at night; final matinee drew only a light crowd but the place was sold out in the evening. During one performance Harold Voise at the end of the flying act made his customary leap into the net but one of

**Photo No. 23—Cole Bros. on lot at Mt. Clemens, Mich., June 22, 1947. Wagons in foreground are No. 104, first aid dept., and No. 51, light plant. Green colored big top is in background. Photo by Don Smith.**



**Photo No. 24—Cole Bros. on lot at Pontiac, Mich., June 27, 1947. In foreground is Cage No. 19, sealions, with big top in back. Photo by Don Smith.**



the stay wires gave way causing the net to drop to the ground. Voise was badly shaken but was not injured. Also while in New Orleans the catcher for the Chamberty's act left causing it to be eliminated from the performance.

Traveling eastward the show went into Mississippi on single stand at Gulfport, September 9, where a late arrival and threatening skies hurt the matinee attendance. The train was three hours behind schedule getting into town. The weather cleared in the evening and an overflow crowd came out but the rains came again shortly after the performance got underway. Moving along the L&N railroad following the Gulf Coast the show went to Mobile, Ala. where business was big even though facing major opposition from a baseball playoff game between Mobile and Chattanooga. It was then on to Florida to play Defuniak Springs, a night only show, Marianna, Tallahassee and two days in Jacksonville; Southeastern Georgia was then crossed in two stands, Waycross, and Savannah, as the show went into South Carolina.



Photo No. 28—Paul Nelson with Harry, the riding sea lion, on Cole Bros. lot, season of 1947. Photo by Frank J. Pouska.

The Sept. 27, 1947 *Billboard* gave forth with current Cole Bros. happenings and said that the threat of storms caused business in Jacksonville the first day to be light. Storm warnings continued the following day so after the matinee Terrell decided the show should tear down, blow the evening performance, and move on to Waycross, Georgia. Fear of the forthcoming storm in Waycross also killed the take for both shows. Earlier in Tallahassee the show had seen only light business, the slim crowds blamed on the unbearable heat which was continuing in this region. Marianna had a sparse afternoon house but strong at night.

In mid-September the circus season was moving into the home stretch. It had been a lively one and most shows had seen their share of competition

from other outfits. The *Billboard* pointed out that Paris, Texas had been visited by three railroad circuses in 1947. As for Cole Bros. overall there had been more opposition this season than usual. The several trips to the west coast in the mid and early 40's were made with relatively little opposition but this season it seemed almost every place the show was routed there was some other circus wanting the same territory. However, as Cole made its tour through the southeastern states it wasn't opposition shows causing the trouble, it was the weather. Near hurricane force winds, rain, and all that goes with these kind of things hit the Cole show very hard at many stands near the Atlantic seaboard.

At Savannah, Georgia on September 18 heavy rains had turned the lot into a regular quagmire. The tough weather held the matinee down to a half house, then the wet stuff became unbearable as it rained in torrents. Terrell gave the order to cancel the evening performance, tear down, load up, and get out of town. Next was scheduled two days in

on to Gastonia. Stands at High Point and Durham completed the week and the show then continued to make a rather lengthy tour of the state and remained there for the next two weeks. Stands played were at Asheville, Hickory, Statesville, Salisbury, Burlington, Raleigh, Wilson, Wilmington, Newbern, Kinston, Williamston, and Greenville.

The Oct. 11, 1947 *Billboard* said that Cole had to battle football and baseball games for patronage at some stands in North Carolina and as a result the draw wasn't up to par with matinees being light and night houses about three quarters. In Asheville there was even a polio scare which was blamed for the below par take. Hickory, however, gave one of the largest matinee crowds in several weeks and at night the tent was filled to capacity. Statesville also drew well. Gastonia had been fair. It was also mentioned that the stand in Columbia, S.C. had been a good one despite cloudy weather in the afternoon and rain at night.

The Oct. 18, 1947 *Billboard* men-



Photo No. 29—Cristiani family on Cole Bros. lot, season of 1947. Left to right are Coracita (Corky), June, Mugar (Paul), Lucio, Ortans, Oscar, Daviso, and Belmonte. Photo by Frank J. Pouska.

Charleston, S.C. There it was found the regular lot was under water so it was necessary to find another, which was unsuitable, and finally the show settled in Martin's Park which is a much too small layout. The opening matinee had to be cancelled but night house was capacity. Second day's afternoon turnout was light but tent was filled again to capacity in the evening. Freddie Freeman writing in his *Billboard* column said this, "In Charleston we tried three lots before we got one. The one we finally got was very small, and how they got everything on it, I'll never know. Whoever laid it out, and I think Capt. Bill Curtis deserves the credit, did a swell job."

The show returned to Georgia for a single stand at Augusta, Sept. 22, then went back into South Carolina for Columbia, and afterwards to North Carolina. First stand in North Carolina was scheduled to be Charlotte, September 24 but because of rain and very high winds the date had to be called off and the train proceeded

tioned that Cole's business had picked up in the Tarheel state after a week hit by football games, bad weather, and other adversities. Burlington and Raleigh were especially good and Salisbury and Wilson were okay. New Bern was only fair and Wilmington gave a three quarters matinee and straw at night despite an all day rain.

In the same issue of *Billboard* Freddie Freeman wrote that of late the show had been getting many small and lopsided lots and this coupled with cold weather that had set in had made it rough on performers such as the Cristianis, Hubert Castle, and the Voise troupe who use their hands so much in their acts. Freddie also wrote that the charcoal and camp fires come into being just as soon as the sun goes down.

At Williamston, N.C., October 10, the



weather was bad but even though the matinee crowd was light the fans came out in the evening. After Greenville, the next day, the show moved into Virginia making a 147 mile Sunday run to Norfolk where performances were given on October 13 and 14. There were high winds and threatening clouds both days. The first matinee drew a half house but the weather did clear late in the afternoon and there was a full tent at night, but the wind and clouds returned the second day and the matinee was lightly attended but a capacity crowd came out in the evening. The show then dipped down into North Carolina to play Elizabeth City where despite a muddy lot and threatening weather there was a strong matinee and capacity at night. Then the show moved back into Virginia for Portsmouth on October 16 and a good day. The route kept up the business of moving back and forth between the two states for a little over a week and after Portsmouth it was back to North Carolina for stands at Tarboro, Goldsboro, and Greensboro. The show couldn't seem to shake the bad weather and in Tarboro there was another downpour of rain but it didn't seem to affect attendance as the crowd at night was on the straw following a three quarters matinee. Returning to Virginia the show was at Danville, October 21, followed by Roanoke, Bluefield, and Pulaski. Business on the final swing through the state was pretty good with afternoon houses ranging from half to three quarters filled and at night it was capacity. The last Sunday run of the season next took the train to Bristol which is on the Tennessee-Virginia line and from there the show moved to Johnson City, Tenn. where the final performances of the 1947 season were given on October 28. The *Billboard* said it was a near perfect finale for the Cole Bros. tour where in moderately cool weather there was a three quarters matinee and capacity night house. Following the last show several performers left to join the Orrin Davenport Shrine Circus which was to begin in Houston, Texas on October 29. The train was loaded and the run of 392 miles to the Louisville quarters was made over the Southern, K & I, and Indiana Terminal Railroads. Total mileage for the season according to the show's official route book was 11,170.

The 1947 season had been a good one for Cole Bros., better than the year before moneywise. Even though the immediate post World War II years were minus the problems and frustrations of trouping while the war was on the profit wasn't as large.

Very little news came out of the Louisville quarters after the show returned there for the winter. Although it had been rumored for some time that Terrell would like to sell the show and

MANITOWOC  
**TUESDAY, JULY 8**  
FAIR GROUNDS

**COLE BROS. CIRCUS**

THIS YEAR EXCELLING BY FAR ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING EVER BEFORE PRESENTED BY COLE BROS.

**THE MOST STUPENDOUS ARRAY of GIGANTIC STARS**  
IN ALL CIRCUS HISTORY, Headed by THE RENOWNED

**CRISTIANI FAMILY**  
WITH LUCIO GREATEST OF ALL RIDING COMEDIANS

**HUBERT CASTLE** STAR OF ALL STARS ON THE TIGHT WIRE

STARTLING NEW ARRAY of HIPPODROME SENSATIONS  
THE ALL NEW AND GORGEOUSLY PRODUCED SUPER-SPECTACLE  
"THE CLOWN IS KING" FEATURING OTTO GREILING  
WORLD FAMOUS CLOWN  
UNPRECEDENTED ASSEMBLAGE OF EUROPEAN THRILLERS INCLUDING  
THE MOST DARING ACT OF  
**THE GREAT DAVISOVS**—IT'S KIND IN THE WORLD

**PAUL NELSON** HORTENZ CHAMBERTYS  
WORLD'S GREATEST LADY ACROBAT LOW AERIAL SENSATION

LIBERTY HORSE ACTS FLYING THRILLERS DELMURLS RUTH NELSON  
HIGH TRAPEZE STARS HIGH PERCH STARS Daring Rider of Rearing Horses

1—GREAT HERDS PERFORMING ELEPHANTS—3  
**350** RENOWNED STARS AND PERFORMERS—50 WORLD FAMOUS CLOWNS—HERDS OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS—250 HORSES AND PONIES—26 TENTS. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**HUGE TRAVELING ZOO** GIGANTIC RAILROAD SHOW  
WILD ANIMALS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD

TWICE DAILY AT 2:15 AND 8:00 P.M. POPULAR PRICES  
DOORS OPEN AT 1 AND 7 P.M.

**HEAR THE STEAM CALLOPE** NOON SHOWDAYS AT CIRCUS GROUNDS



Newspaper advertisement for Cole Bros. stand at Manitowoc, Wis., July 8, 1947. Collection of Robert K. Kadow.

retire, nothing really developed so far as was publically announced. Terrell went right ahead with plans to take the show under his command on the road in 1948. The Dec. 27, 1947 *Billboard* in a most informative article told of some of these plans. One major change in personnel would take place in that Henry Kyes was signed to be the show's bandleader in 1948 replacing Eddie Woeckener who had been on the show since the 1943 season. Kyes had served as bandleader on the 10 car Sparks Circus in 1947. It was also mentioned that plans are being made for a new opening spec, the name of which will be revealed later. Work is going ahead in quarters where most of the menagerie wagons had gone through the repair shops and have now gone to the paint department. Flat cars are being re-decked and baggage wagons are to start rolling into the shops next week. Animals and props which made the Kansas City, Mo. and Wichita, Kan. dates are now back in quarters. Three carloads of performing stock and props were to go to the Chicago Coliseum on December 25 to begin indoor dates for Orrin Davenport. The unit will be out weeks and will later play Toledo, Grand Rapids, Mich., Detroit and Cleveland. One in-

teresting item in the article said that Cole Bros. was returning to white canvas in 1948. O'Henry Tent & Awning Co. of Chicago had been given an order for a new layout of the major tents using white canvas. These included a big top, 150 with three 50's; menagerie, 80 with five 30's, and sideshow, 60 with three 20's. All tents will be made of duck, flame-proofed, at one mill. It was pointed out that it would be the first white canvas big top the show had used since 1940. In 1947 the top was green and had been blue colored from 1941 through 1946.

So with the news of the white tops returning to Cole Bros. there were happy smiles on the faces of the trouper and fans who never did particularly like the darker hues of blue, green, etc. which had been in vogue since John Ringling North first came forth with a blue big top for Ringling-Barnum back in 1940. Thus with the final reports from the circus world having appeared in the trade publications, the year, 1947, passed into history.

- Train Loading Order  
Cole Bros. Circus, Season of 1947  
(From Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., files)  
(The order vehicles unloaded from flat cars. Flat car numbers shown are for numerical sequence only, not individual car numbers.)
- 1.—No. 82, Stake & chain wagon, Small pull away tractor, Truck; No. 65, Concession wagon.
  - 2.—No. 100, Light plant, train; No. 21, Steam boiler wagon, No. 20, Cookhouse refer. & supplies wagon; No. 22, Cookhouse canvas & props wagon, Stake driver.
  - 3.—No. 40, Menagerie canvas wagon; No. 42, Menagerie poles & rigging wagon, Small tab cart (Mother Goose), Small tab cart (Old Woman in Shoe).
  - 4.—Truck; No. 90, Big top rigging wagon; No. 87, Big top canvas wagon; No. 88, Big top canvas wagon.
  - 5.—Truck; No. 70, Padroom canvas & poles wagon, Concession wagon; No. 61, Side show canvas & props wagon.
  - 6.—Tractor; No. 103, Big top poles, Small pick up truck.
  - 7.—Tractor; No. 51, Light plant; No. 50, Light plant; No. 53, Light dept. supplies wagon.
  - 8.—Truck; Tractor; No. 65, Cage, side show fighting lion; No. 104, Garage for Zack Terrell's car, also first-aid wagon.
  - 9.—No. 93, Chairs wagon; No. 73, Trunks wagon; No. 86, Chairs wagon; No. 83, Seat planks wagon, No. 85, Chairs wagon.
  - 10.—No. 89, Chairs & bibles wagon; America wagon, steam callopie; No. 81, Props wagon; No. 84, Bibles wagon.
  - 11.—No. 94, Bibles & chairs wagon; No. 72, Trunks wagon; No. 92, Seat planks wagon; No. 71, Harness wagon.
  - 12.—No. 75, Stake & chain wagon; No. 101, Jacks & stringers wagon; Columbia wagon, sideshow baggage & reserve ticket wagon.
  - 13.—No. 102, Jacks & stringers wagon; Red ticket wagon, office wagon; No. 74, Trunks wagon.
  - 14.—No. 17, Cage, 2 lions, 2 leopards, & 1 tiger; No. 10, Cage, 4 deer; No. 9, Cage, 3 kangaroos; No. 12, Cage, gnu; No. 16, Cage, monkeys.
  - 15.—No. 18, Cage, deer; No. 8, Cage, monkeys; No. 15, Cage, bears; No. 14, Cage, hippo; No. 19, Cage, seals.



# JUMBO RECYCLED

by Richard W. Flint

Jumbo, the large elephant which P.T. Barnum bought from the London Zoo to exhibit with his circus in 1882, was one of the most famous circus attractions ever featured. Jumbo elicited so much publicity and gained so much fame that his name entered the English language to mean anything big. On 15 September 1885, however, Jumbo was struck and killed by a railroad locomotive in St. Thomas, Ontario, and the circus was without its best attraction, the largest living elephant in captivity.

Barnum, ever the enterprising showman, decided to stuff the skin and mount the bones of the dead Jumbo and tour them with his circus. In addition, Barnum acquired from the London Zoo an elephant named Alice who he said was "the companion and so-called 'wife' of the great Jumbo ... Alice joined the Greatest Show on Earth in the early days of her widowhood, and was exhibited side by side with the skeleton and stuffed hide of Jumbo."<sup>1</sup>

Turning a dead elephant into a lively new attraction was the work of Barnum, his business partners and press agents, and a taxidermist. Professor Henry A. Ward of Rochester, New York, was contracted to prepare the skin and bones. When Barnum learned that "in stuffing the skin, it could be made considerably larger than in nature!" he wrote Ward "by all means let that show as large as possible. It will be a grand thing to take all advantage possible in this direction! Let him show like a mountain!"<sup>2</sup> But one of Barnum's partners, James L. Hutchinson, thought it "vastly more important that he should look natural than that his size should be increased."<sup>3</sup> And while Barnum was concerned with allowing Ward adequate time, even a year or two, to prepare the dead Jumbo properly, Hutchinson wanted the skin and skeleton "to exhibit next season ... at a time when it [is] worth something."

Hutchinson realized the publicity value of Jumbo and, amid the flurry of letters between Ward and the Barnum show, several press agents preparing the show's advertising campaign for the season of 1886 queried the scientist as he set about his work in preparing Jumbo. W.H. Gardner, for example, wrote on 6 January 1886 requesting two or three tints of Jumbo's skull "as we need it for our designer to help him in designing a bill of Jumbo's Skeleton ..."

Hutchinson, the active manager of the Barnum circus, wrote to Ward five days later on 11 January explaining that:

"We are preparing for publication and extensive circulation a handsome illustrated pamphlet, entitled, 'The Life and Death of Jumbo,' in which it is desired to make his effigy and skeleton a very prominent and attractive feature. You can materially aid us in this, by kindly furnishing us an official statement, briefly narrating the manner in which the work of preparing the effigy and skeleton was done ..."

Members of the newspaper press corps were also to be brought to Rochester to view the two Jumbos—



"The Life and Death of Jumbo" a courier printed by the Courier Company, Buffalo, N.Y. and widely distributed in advance of the display of the mounted skin and skeleton of the famous elephant in 1886. Albert Conover Collection.

one, the stuffed hide; the other, the mounted skeleton—early in March, but on 23 February 1886 Hutchinson wrote a revealing letter to Ward:

"We find it necessary to send the reporters a few days sooner than originally intended, because we want to incorporate the best of their reports in our advertisements and we cannot wait any longer or we will be late with the very important part of our work, 'advertising.'"

Today Hamilton, one of the circus' most skilled press agents, departed New York with several reporters from the city's newspapers. In Rochester, Hamilton was joined by another press

agent, Charles Stow, and representatives of local Rochester papers as well as the Associated Press. Stow had written in advance to Ward explaining that "the reporters are our guests" and that "Mr. Hamilton will see that their thirsty souls are bathed in grape juice, corn elixer, etc."<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately for the Barnum firm, the facts of preparing Jumbo were leaked to the New York *World* and though it "was not much," Hamilton felt "it was just enough to interfere with its publication in the other papers to the extent we had hoped" for there was a "disinclination" on the part "of Editors here using anything a day old."

Stow, in Buffalo at the Courier Company's printing plant to prepare the "Life and Death of Jumbo," used extracts from nine New York City papers "though I must confess that the notices, as a whole, were not what I had hoped for." Stow, too, blamed the news leak in the Rochester *Democrat* which the New York *World* "with characteristic dishonesty and violation of good faith, stole and published as original ..."

Ward, who had contracted with the Barnum show to prepare Jumbo for \$1200, found the project to be greater than he had estimated. Barnum wrote to Ward on 1 March 1886 saying that "this is a matter of business" and regretted Ward "made a mistake, but it is no fault of ours, and you will surely gain thousands of dollars through the celebrity which the affair will give to you and your business." Press agent Stow also consoled Ward, hoping "that the very fine advertising you will certainly receive through our various publications will redound greatly to your advantage."<sup>6</sup> When Hutchinson sent Ward payment for the project, he added that "You will find when you see our printing that you and your institute have not been forgotten."<sup>7</sup>

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# Get A High Backed Grandstand Chair

By Kenneth D. Hull

One must be what we call mature, or well up in years to ever recall hearing the above cry coming from one of the inside ticket sellers standing tall on his stand inside the circus big top. However back in the thirties, forties and early fifties when the huge railers were covering the land twice a day as you proceeded into the big top and around the hippodrome track this steady, throaty shout could be heard throughout the big top. It was part of the thrill along with the other noises and smells of this wonderful traveling organization.

What was it like to be an individual perched atop one of these high flimsy looking stands as the circus crowds shoved and pushed their way into the fast filling big top? This was in the times when jobs were scarce and pay was little. Your writer spent a few seasons on both the A.G. Barnes-Sells-Floto and the Ringling-Barnum shows working at jobs like a tax box man, in time keeping, and in the red wagon on Barnes and as a reserved seat inside ticket seller on the Ringling circus and I still remember just how it really was back during those years on a big railroad circus.

Even though the Ringlings owned and operated both of these tenters one found some things to be different on each show. Different not only in size, Barnes being on thirty cars and Ringling on around ninety odd, but in accommodations and the way one was treated. On Barnes you were always crowded as was all of the gear and equipment on the show. During its last years out it was one of the truly heavy loaded circuses. On The Big Show you and every one else had more room and seldom were any of the wagons loaded as heavy over all as were the wagons on say a Barnes or Cole-show.

Food was outstanding on both shows and it was always a pleasure to get to go to the cookhouse. Men like ticket sellers, the wagon office men, timekeepers and the like were not as high up as some staff members but you were treated well and were expected to appear at all times in the cookhouse wearing a tie and a jacket. The circus members had and used rank more in those days than one can imagine and most members of the show knew their place and acted as expected. One was very aware of just where they stood on one of these big railers.

Out of your probably eighteen to twenty dollars a week salary a dollar

tip went to your sleeping car porter as well as another dollar to your cookhouse waiter. On Ringling if you liked say milk to drink rather than coffee or ice tea on the hot days you may have milk by coming up with yet another quarter tip to your waiter. Front door ticket takers on Barnes had yet another quarter to tip and this was to the boss taker on the front door that upped and down the canvas for the marquee and kept the red wagon clean. He received this tip for having wash and drinking water for the front door crew right behind the curtain of the marquee. He also hung and packed the uniform coats into the red wagon. You can see that if a car porter had a rather full car of staff or performers he did pretty good for himself in tips each week. He of course had a few expenses to the train head porter. Thus it went for all needs. The show light plant boss in addition to his salary might get a few bucks more each week by having both cigarettes and miniatures of booze for sale.

On the Barnes circus ticket sellers might act as kid pushers in erecting the seats in the mornings and then were held at night to roll up one middle

This photo, although taken in 1937, shows the grandstand seating of the big top on the Barnes-Sells-Floto Circus.



piece of the big top to speed the tear down. Both tax box men aided on the tear downs by handing up the grand stand chairs to an usher for stacking in a chair wagon.

Duties of ticket personnel on Ringling were a bit different. On a late arrival ticket sellers might boss in placing chairs but never touched the lumber at all. One was treated nearly as a gentleman on this big org as they had a lot of working people to do this type of work. This show expected and demanded that front door men and ticket crews looked clean and neat at all times.

A few words to tell about life in the show sleepers. Both shows had very clean cars for the staff and performers. My wife having been a performer we were together on each show. This is not always the way it is done as on some shows the ticket and office men slept in certain cars while performers were bedded in others. Our berth while on the West coast show was an upper in car number 41 which was the third best car on the train. Car #39 was the show private car and housed five people they being Ben Austin, the manager, Paul Eagles the general manager, Mr. and Mrs. Ike Robertson, he was the show treasurer and the car porter. This car had the open vestibule on the rear and was quite old but had black leather





The 1940 season was one of the last before the sunburst wheels of menagerie cages were changed to rubber tires on the Ringling-Barnum show. Bob Good Photo.

divans and chairs in the living room with a rather brown carpet. The next car forward #40 was the state room car and it too had the open vestibule on the rear. Again this car was not real crowded and carried the big acts like the Riffenachs bare back riders. Bob Thornton the equestrian director, the Yom Kam troupe, the flying act and a few others. Car #41 was the next one forward on the train and carried nearly seventy people. My wife and I occupied an upper berth with Mr. and Mrs. John White one of the show's horse trainers being below us. Forward of us alone in an upper was the circus mailman and bandleader, Eddie Woekener. Eddie was quite hard of hearing and would come in at night and slam the mail bag up into the bunk hitting the thin walled divider between berths and about awaken all that had gone to sleep in this car.

Mabel Stark, the tiger trainer rode this car as did George Tipton, the cookhouse Steward. Walter McClain the boss bull man and Eddie Trees the menagerie superintendent shared the lower berth below the band leader. Leonard Karsh that was head man on the front door was aboard. He had come over from the short lived Tim McCoy show. Josephine the snake charmer as well as a few other side show personnel lived in this car #41. The car porter had a berth that ran cross ways of the car above the end door at the men's rest room end of the car. Moving still forward the next car carried bunks that were mostly three high and this sleeper housed show members like ticket sellers, clowns and the big show band members.

Running along the top inside of these sleepers were old house water heating tanks and these contained the water for washing and drinking and all during the night one could hear the water splashing back and forth as the cars would move along through the country. Every other sleeper contained a

Delco plant for lights. This plant would be mounted in the end of the car and on the side away from the steps on the other side. Since there was no show bus on Barnes these Delco putt putt machines were a guide on dark nights in strange railroad yards when trying to find the sleepers. Never was there hot water aboard. The same was true for heat of any kind and air conditioning. Your sleeper it seemed was always stinking hot or ice box cold.

When retiring at night you left your shoes in the aisle for the porter to shine. The women had a toilet and a wash room at one end of the car and the men the same set up at the other end of the car. Because of these plumbing arrangements only one door is left at each end of the car for getting on or off the train. If you entered your sleeper at the front end on the right you got off from the other end on the left side of the car. One could step forward to the connecting car then dismount from the right if desired. No space was wasted in any way aboard these show trains. The car porter had a small closet where he would store your heavy coats when not needed. The insides of these sleepers would be painted a soft grey or light green and had curtains for each berth. Smoking was never allowed on these old wooden cars of the Barnes show but was permitted on the Ringling circus as the cars were so much newer and better. While on the subject of wooden cars my wife and I could lay in our berth and reach up and pick dry rot from the frame around the tiny window at the top of our crowded berth.

While on the Ringling circus we rode the fourth section of the trains so as a rule was rather late in getting into town. Our berth here was a lower and above for a neighbor we had a catcher for one of the three flying acts. Next door to the rear were a couple from England that worked one ring of Alfred Court's wild animal acts. These people had both the lower and upper berth with the upper having been removed so of course they had rather comfortable quarters. Two of the show midgets were in a lower one berth ahead of us and they had a short mattress and so



The manager of the side show on Barnes-Sells-Floto is pictured making an opening during the 1938 season. Joe Heiser Photo.

could actually stand up and move around at the one end of their berth. I was the only individual aboard this car that was not a performer so it was a little strange to me. Also in the car were a few clowns, a horse trainer and a girl rider or two. It was a fine set up over all. Numerous persons in this sleeper had single berths be they upper or lower.

On the Barnes show what would be the fifth car forward or the fourth car back of the eight sleepers was the pie car. The rear half for the staff and performers the front half for the working men that rode in the three forward sleepers. The car carried one stateroom for the show auditor, Theo Forestal, and this was where most of the day's take would be carried at night. No one rode the ticket wagon on the flats as was done on the Big Show. City police would offer their services to protect the show Packard going to the train at night with the big part of the days take. In certain cities I would be sent out to grab a local street car having a shoe box under my arm with most of the money rolled in a newspaper inside this box. The show bosses did not trust the police in that city. One thing that was very different on Ringling when you rode the last section you did not get to make use of a pie car. Instead the car porter had a closet at one end of the car and from this tiny space he would dispense all the things like liverwurst, cheese and other sandwiches as well as drinks both hot and cold. In fact he nearly offered all the pie car did except for cooking certain items.

My wife being a performer got her bath with ease every day on the lot from a water bucket in the ladies end of the pad room. I never had such fine comforts as this so at night I would disrobe in the close confines of our berth and she would proceed to the womens end of the car to bring me a wash pan of water with which to make myself clean. If the day had been hot,





The interior of the cookhouse on the Ringling-Barnum Circus in 1940 shows the performers and bosses end of the tent.

hot, hot the water might be a little warm but if it was wet and cold out the water would be even colder. I might add the water one shaved with in the mornings was always one temperature. COLD. You had to like it or you could not have stood the life.

Duties while being on the tax box and working in timekeeping or while in the red wagon filled most of the day and probably up to around nine at night. Then perhaps you were part of the tear down crew. On Ringling the inside ticket men did no labor of any kind. We wore bright red full dress uniforms with long tails and a lot of gold trim. This was while we were on the stands selling our chair seats. After this we changed into a short jacket to wear while going through the crowds. At times when in the larger cities and there for more than a day these uniforms would be sent out to be cleaned. If when donning these after a clean job and the day was hot your neck and shoulders would become nearly raw as the heavy gold epaulets and other parts of the uniform covered with this gold trim, held the cleaning solution.

At the end of each performance and while the crowds were making their way toward the front door a few sellers would stand on one of these folding chairs taken from the grandstand and make one final effort to snag one more live one for a concert ticket. It was always rather odd to me standing high on that chair that was never too steady and feeling the masses of humanity all trying to shove and push their way into the narrow connection going toward the menagerie top. In a way it was interesting to see their faces and wondering just what they were thinking. So many registered tiredness and worry on their faces, others would be all smiles and talk about what they had just seen. There was no intermission in those days and the performance on Ringling would run three hours and not a moment was ever cut from the show that season.



This 1940 photo shows the interior of the Ringling-Barnum big top with steel arenas in three rings plus two stages.

On this huge Ringling-Barnum tent one could find in the back yard a top called the band top. As one would guess it housed the big show band members as well as ushers, front door men and the ticket sellers. When I say housed I mean to imply this was the dressing tent for these members of the show. The tent was a most busy place and could be most crowded at times. It contained a doniker or toilet dug in the ground off one corner of the tent and was a smelly thing during the hot days. A long table much like the ones in the cookhouse ran along one side of the tent and this held soap and wash pans for washing purposes. In the middle of the tent were high pipes holding another same table above except this was filled with hooks on the bottom side on which uniforms hung and your hat and the uniform caps were placed on this table affair. One just dressed standing but the band leader Merele Evans and the boss ticket seller Tommy Haines had fine canvas easy chairs

to rest in. The lesser members of the departments in this top could rest in the big top by stretching out across several of the reserved seat chairs or go lay in the grass if there was any with the weather being suitable for this type of resting.

The days and your duties were long and tiring under the best of conditions let alone when it was windy, cold, wet, or dusty which it appeared to be most of the time. On occasion one would ask of himself. What am I doing here? I do believe that many times it was the sound of the band music that would get to you when the going was rough. While with Ringling during the season of 1940 we went seventeen weeks once without a day off and this becomes a drag after so long a time.

Circuses like Cole, Haganbeck-Wallace and Barnes used tops having a twelve foot sidewall. The Ringling big top used side poles that were seventeen feet high. On days when we had a straw house and it was your turn to say work the back end blues it could be rough for the ticket man. You worked your way up through the seats and in so doing of course stepped on a few hands or fingers of the paying customer and he got upset over this plus the fact you were blocking his view and he did not really care about seeing the after show anyhow, so it might be a little risky trying to work your way back down that you did as a rule, so to get back down after reaching the top row of seats you just leaned out and grabbed the tie down rope of the side pole and slid to the ground. This could be a chore on dark wet nights but was safer than stirring up the crowds in the seats any more coming down.

When I attend the modern shows today in the comfort of an air conditioned building or a big top pitched on a paved shopping mall, I cannot help but wonder what these circus people would think of the way it used to be. It was fine if you liked it. If it was not in your blood you would never make it.



Edna Hull, wife of the author is shown on the Al G. Barnes-Sells-Floto Circus during the Los Angeles, Ca. stand in 1938. All illustrations are from the Pfennig collection.



# 40th ANNIVERSARY CHS CONVENTION GREAT SUCCESS

A total of 66 enthusiastic Circus Historical Society members, wives and guests converged upon Bloomington/Normal, Illinois, July 2, 3 and 4, 1979, for the convention celebrating the forty years since the founding of the organization in 1939.

Many suggested that this was one of the best organized programs ever offered by the CHS. CHS President Tom Parkinson, was chairman of the meeting and was assisted by local members Dennis Watson and Sam Stern. Watson handled the registration and Stern the contacts with the retired circus performers in the area.

Most people arrived on August 1 in order to be on hand for the opening of the program on the morning of Thursday, August 2. All of the program presented on Thursday and Friday took place in the Milner Library of Illinois State University. The hosts were Robert Sokan, special collections librarian and Dr. Joseph W. Kraus, director of libraries at the University.

Starting at 10 a.m. a paper on *W.C. Coup and the New York Aquarium* by Dr. Robert J. Loeffler, was read by Tom Parkinson. Dr. Loeffler was unable to attend. Following was an introduction to the Illinois State University Libraries and its circus collection by Robert Sokan and Joe Kraus. Mr. Sokan told of the circus collections in the library from Sverre Braathen, Walter Scholl, Everett Richey, Harold Ramage, Al Dobritch and Cal Tinney. In addition the rare book room of the Milner Library contains over 6,000 different circus books, many from the famous collection of Jo VanDoveran, of Amsterdam, Holland. This book collection is by far the most complete in the world, and reaches back to some of the first books ever published on the circus. Mr. Sokan explained the progress made so far in cataloging the hundreds of thousands of items in the full collection. The group then adjourned for lunch at the ISU Student Union, located next door to the library.

Returning to the meeting room at the library at 1:30 p.m. the group divided into a "red" and a "blue" unit, with one half going to the rare book room on the sixth floor and other across the campus to Williams Hall, where the circusiana material, other than books, is filed. On the following day the groups switched locations. In this way the groups remained small enough to fully inspect the material without getting in each other's way.

Dr. Kraus conducted the group to the Rare Book Room and Mr. Sokan to the circusiana collection. A large number

of different types of circus books had been brought from the closed stacks to the reading room, and any other book was available on request after being selected from the card file. In this way those who had a special interest could have access to any book in the collection.

A number of items were placed on the reading tables in the circus room in Williams Hall also. Mr. Sokan and his former assistant Ms. Nancy Fry, who had returned just to aid the CHS group, also pulled special requests from the closed files of photos, letters and other circus printed material. Most of the material, including route books, programs and correspondence was available to the group on the shelves of the circus room itself. A number of photo albums were available, mostly from the Sverre Braathen collection. Much of the Ringling Bros. Circus business records formerly owned by Braathen and now cataloged by the University were inspected by the group. Braathen's policy was to have two of each program and route book and his will required that the University continue to hold the duplicate copies. The Braathen photographic negatives have not as yet been fully cataloged, but when this has been completed it is planned that prints will be made available. The two hours spent in each of the locations went very quickly, and many expressed their plans to return when more time was available.

The group reassembled at 4 p.m. and returned to the Holiday Inn where they

were on their own for dinner and jackpots on Thursday evening.

Returning to the University at 9:30 a.m. on August 3, the group heard a paper read by Stuart Thayer on the subject of *Urban Development and Circus Lots*. This most interesting and well researched paper traced the changing location of circus lots as cities grew and shifted population.

At 10:15 Richard Flint presented a program of slides covering the *Development of Circus Poster Printing in America*. Using two projectors and screens side by side Mr. Flint by site and sound told of the change from early wood cut posters to the very colorful full rainbow colored bills that were produced using lithographic stones. A number of slides showed the actual press rooms and steam presses used. The various stages of design of a poster were illustrated, along with some of the very early bills and in some cases actual photos of the wagons shown in the illustrations on the lithos.

At 11:00 a short film taken in 1938 was shown of the Gamma Phi Circus, a production of the students and faculty of Illinois State University that has been presented in Normal for fifty years. Dr. Clifford E. Horton then told of the early days of the college circus and its growth from his first experience in 1903 with a similar show at a West Coast YMCA. The Gamma Phi show was at first a series of acrobatic type acts, but is now extended to a full circus program including juggling, wire walking and aerial numbers. Dr. Horton is now 87 years of age, and has been honored by the University by having the Fieldhouse named after him. CHS member Jerry Polacek is director of the Gamma Phi Circus and

**CHS officers at the convention are:**  
Richard W. Flint, Vice-President; Tom Parkinson, President and Edward L. Jones, Secretary-Treasurer.







This photo taken in the rare book room of the Milner Library shows Dr. Joe W. Kraus, far left, Robert Parkinson and John Kunzog.

he was on hand to introduce Dr. Horton.

After lunch visits were again made to the book and circusiana collections.

At 7 p.m. on August 3 the group met for dinner at the Holiday Inn. This dinner was part of the convention fee. Following dinner CHS Past President Fred D. Pfening, Jr. traced the 40 year history and growth of the Circus Historical Society. Past Vice President C.P. Fox brought the group up to date on the various circuses, ice shows and Circus World operated by the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey parent corporation. Of special interest were his comments on the Monte Carlo unit, and how it is now being presented under

canvas at Circus World in Florida. President Parkinson read letters from Joe McKennon and Past President Bette Leonard, who were unable to attend.

The evening was closed with the showing of two recently discovered movies of Ringling-Barnum and Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West in 1927. These fine 16 mm films were taken by an employee of the Eastman Kodak Co. where the shows played Rochester, N.Y. in 1927. The films were shown by CHS Vice President Richard W. Flint, of Rochester, N.Y.

The group convened on Saturday, August 4 at the Holiday Inn at 9:30 a.m. Stuart Thayer showed a group of slides of black and white photos taken of the Ringling Bros. World's Greatest Shows in 1902. The original 4 x 5 glass plate negatives were owned by Baker Young and his son and have since been



CHS Director Copeland MacAllister looks over a 1919 Ringling-Barnum program from the Braathen collection at Illinois State University.

sold to Albert Conover. Mr. Thayer's slides were made from prints from Al Conover.

At 10:15 a.m. Dr. Penelope Leavitt-Moy presented a paper on *The Floating Palace of Spalding & Rogers Circus*. Illustrations were passed during the talk. This paper will be published in a future issue of the *Bandwagon*.

At 11:15 a.m. C.P. "Chappie" Fox told of an interview with Elsie Jung, wife of the well known clown Paul Jung. Called "*Recollections of a Circus Living Statue*," his comments give interesting details of how the gold was applied to the bodies of the "statues" and the special facilities that were provided for the performers in the act.

#### CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY May 1, 1978 thru April 30, 1979

Balance in First National Bank May 1, 1978 4529.08

##### Receipts:

Dues	11138.46
Subscriptions	1889.00
Back Issue Sales	602.47
Advertising	1337.99
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>14967.92</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>19497.00</b>

##### Disbursements:

Bandwagon Printing	17142.53
Bandwagon Postage	295.00
Bandwagon Mailing Expense	697.39
Sec'y-Treas. Expense	201.02
Sec'y-Treas. Postage	515.00
Bank Service Charge and	
Canadian Exchange	12.21
Misc. Expense	32.26
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>18895.41</b>
<b>Balance in First National Bank April 30, 1979</b>	<b>601.59</b>

Note: The May 1, 1978 balance included some 1979 dues received. The BANDWAGON printing cost includes the March April 1978 issue, making seven issues paid in 1979 fiscal year. We are now on a full cash basis. All 1980 dues were held for deposit until after May 1, 1979. Audited statement prepared by Gerald F. Combs June 4, 1979.

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This behind the scenes story on a most unusual circus act was most interesting.

The group met together again for lunch and hosted a group of residents of Bloomington who were with local flying acts. They were introduced by Sam Stern and each spoke briefly about their experiences and the circuses with whom they appeared.

At 2:00 p.m. a paper by Dr. James Moy on *The Great Spectacles of Barnum & Bailey* was read by his wife Penny Leavitt-Moy. This was followed by a discussion of the Circus and Endangered Species, a look at the new rules and how they affect circuses by Dr. Roland F. Gibbs.

At 3:15 p.m. Greg Parkinson, assistant director of Circus World Museum Library, presented a demonstration of the mounting of circus lithographs. This was one of the most informative sessions of the whole convention. Using a torn half sheet poster Mr. Parkinson explained and actually mounted the paper on Chartex cloth backing, using the technique developed by John Lentz. This practical application was of vital interest to the many collectors of circus lithographs in attendance. Many felt the knowledge learned was alone worth the trip to the convention.

The grand finale of the convention was a dinner at the GRAND HOTEL. This restaurant is located in the house located on the property of the former

Ward flying act training barn. The old Ward home served as a rooming house for the trapeze performers and gained the nickname the "Grand Hotel." The barn, first owned by the Ward family, was last owned by Arthur Concello. The barn was located at the rear of the house and the concrete floor still remains and serves as a parking lot for the restaurant operated by Mrs. Helen Benton. It was a fitting circus location for the closing of a great CHS convention.

On Friday evening a meeting of the CHS officers and directors was held and the financial affairs of the Society were discussed, as well as future plans to expand the membership of the organization.

Those attending the convention, coming from seventeen states and Canada included: Fred D. Pfening, Jr.; Mr. & Mrs. Fred D. Pfening, III; Charles F. Hill; Mrs. James Moy; Mr. & Mrs. Walter W. Searfoss; Mr. & Mrs. Edward Binner; Donald L. Hensey; Mr. & Mrs. Fred Dahlinger; Stuart Thayer; Tom Parkinson; Robert Parkinson; Greg Parkinson; C.P. Fox; Charles Simmons; Dennis Watson; Jerry Polacek; Albert Hodgini, Jr.; Barry Dubuque; Dr. Gordon Brown; Copeland MacAllister; Tom Barron; Mr. & Mrs. David Carpenter; Mr. & Mrs. James Dunwoody; Mr. & Mrs. Al Tietel; Sidney R. Smith; Mr. & Mrs. George Neuman; Ralph B. Johnson; Wilton

Eckley; Fred W. Dies; John C. Kunzog; Roselee Hoffman; Mr. & Mrs. Harold Stekly; Mr. & Mrs. Edward L. Jones; Mr. & Mrs. Peter H. Cobb; Hulda Gotch.; Marian B. Cobb; Deborah Micklos; Larry Baggett; Richard W. Flint; Mr. & Mrs. Tom Morrissey; Dr. Roland Gibbs; Sam Stern and Arthur Brown.  
—Fred D. Pfening, Jr.


### To The Editor

On page 31 of the March/April, 1979 issue photo No. 3 shows a cage in the wagon graveyard at West Baden, Indiana. The caption reads, "The cage was probably used by Hagenbeck-Wallace and left there when the show went into quarters in Peru following the 1924 season."

The pictured cage is the former Ringling Brothers number 37, built in 1893 by Moeller Brothers. It was left in Baraboo when the circus went out in 1918 and remained there until 1925 when the King Brothers purchased it for their ten car Walter L. Main Circus.

In 1929 the Donaldson Lithographing Company foreclosed the King's circus and stored the equipment at West Baden. Cage 37 was never on the road after 1929. The source of this information is "The Ringling Cages of 1893," by Conover and Thayer, *BANDWAGON*, May/June, 1969.

Sincerely,  
S. Thayer



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